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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFF. CHAUCER.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

THE MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

From Urry's Edition 1721,

THE CANTERBURY TALES

From Tyrwhitt's Edition 1775.

Grete well CHAUCER when ye mete----

Of dities and of songes glade,

The which he----made,

The longe fulfilled is over all.

GOWER.

My maister CHAUCER----chiefe poete of Bretayne----

Whom all this longe schulde of ryght preferre,

Sith of our langage he was the lode-sterre----

That made first to dyspyle and rayne

The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence

Into our tunge thurgh his excellence.

LYDGATE.

The honour of English tong is dede----

My mayster CHAUCER, floure of eloquence,

Mirroure of fructuous ententement,

Univerfel fadir in science----

This londis verray tresour and richeffe----

The firste fynder of our fayre langage.

OCCLEVE.

Venerabill CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,

Revinly trumpet, orlege and regulere,

In eloquence balme, condict and diall,

Mylky fountane, clere strand, and rois riall,

Of fresche endite throw Albioun island draid.

DOUGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! rose of rethouris all,

As in oure tounge flour imperial

That raise in Brittain evir, quha reidis right

Thou beiris of Makers the triumphs royall,

The fresche enamilt termes celestiall:

This mater couth haif illuminit full bricht,

Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,

Surmounting every tounge terrestriall

As far as May's morrow dois midnigh.

DUNBAR.

VOL. X.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1782.

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VOL. I.
LONDON:
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1841.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.
VOL. X.

CONTAINING HIS
MISCELLANEOUS PIECES, *viz.*

TESTAMENT OF CRESEIDE, LEGENDE OF GOOD WOMEN, PRAISE OF WOMEN,		BELLE DAME SANS MERCY, ASSEMBLE OF LADIES, <i>Sc. Sc. Sc.</i>
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But natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty Tale sain,
But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath sayd hem in swiche English as he can
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have not sayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath sayd hem in another----
Who so that wol his large Volume seke. *TALES, ver. 4465.*

Dan CHAUCER, well of English undefil'd,
On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be fil'd----
Old Dan Geoffrey, in whose gentle spright
The pure well-head of poetry did dwell----
He whilst he lived was the sovaigne head
Of shepherds all-----

SPENSER.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning star,
To us discovers day from far;
His light those mists and clouds dissolv'd
Which our dark nation long involv'd;
But he descending to the shades
Darkness again the age invades.

DENHAM.

CHAUCER, him who first with harmony inform'd
The language of our fathers---His legends blithe
He sang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
Of homely life, thro' each estate and age
The fashions and the follies of the world
With cunning hand portraying-----
Him who in times-----

Dark and untaught began with charming verse
To tame the rudeness of his native land.

AKENSIDE.

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MISCELLANEOUS PIECES, &c.
TESTAMENT OF GREGGISE, || BIRTH OF THE FIRST PRINCE,
LARGEST OF GOOD WOMEN, || ASSEMBLING OF LADIES,
PRINCE OF WOMEN.

THESE POETICAL WORKS OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER, ESQ.
ARE NOW IN THE
POSSESSION OF
HIS EXCELLENCY
THE EARL OF
ARUNDEL, AT
BLENHEIM PALACE,
OXFORD.



AT THE SPECIE HOUSE, BY THE MARSHES,
EDINBURGH:
JAMES L. 1811.

MISCELLANIES.

Here followeth the piteful and dolorous

TESTAM. OF FAIRE CRESEIDE.

A DOLY feson till a carefull dite
Should corresponde and be equivalent;
Right so it was when I began to write
This tragedy, the wedir right servent,
Whan Aries in middis of the Lent
Showris of haile gan fro the north discende,
That scantly fro the cold I might me defende.

Yet nerthelesse within mine orature
I stode, whan Titan had his hemis bright
Withdrawin down, and scyld undir cure,
And faire Venus the beaute of the night,
Upraise, and sette unto the wesse ful right
Her goldin face, in oppositioun
Of god Phæbus, directe discending doun.

Testament of Creseide.] The author of *The Testament of Creseide*, which might pass for the sixth book of this story, I have been informed by Sir James Erskine late Earl of Kelly, and diverse aged scholars of the Scottish nation, was one Mr. Robert Henderson, chief schoolmaster of Dumferlin, a little time before Chaucer was first printed, and dedicated to King Henry VIII. by Mr. Thynne, which was near the end of his reign. Mr. Henderson wittily observing that Chaucer in his fifth book had related the death of Troilus, but made no mention what became of Creseide, he learnedly takes upon him, in a fine poetical way, to expreis the punishment and end due to a false unconstant whore, which commonly terminates in extreame misery. *Urry.*

Throughout the glasse her bemis brast so faire
 That I might se on every side me by,
 The northrin winde hath purified the aire,
 And shedde his misty cloudis fro the skie,
 The froste fresid, the blastis bittirly
 Fro pole Artike came whisking loud and still,
 And causid me remove ayenst my will: 21

For I trustid that Venus, Lov'is queene,
 To whom somtime I hight obedience,
 My fadid hert of love she would make grene,
 And therupon with humble reverence
 I thought to praie her hie magnificence,
 But for grete colde as than I lettid was,
 And in my chambre to the fire gan pas. 28

Though love be hote, yet in a man of age
 It kindlith nat so sone as in youthed,
 Of whom the blode is flowing in a rage,
 And in the olde the corage dul and ded,
 Of whiche the fire outwarde is best remed:
 To helpe by phisike wher that nature failed
 I am experte, for bothe I have assailed. 35

I made the fire and bekid me aboute,
 Than toke I drinke my spirites to comforte,
 And armid me wel fro the colde theroute:
 To cutte the wintir night and make it shorte
 I toke a quere, and leste al othir sporte,
 Writin by worthy Chaucer glorious
 Of faire Creseide and lusty Troilus: 42

And there I founde after that Diomedes
 Receivd had that lady bright of hewe
 How Troilus nere out of his witte abrede,
 And wept full sore, with visage pale of hewe,
 For which wanhope his teris gan renewe
 While Esperus rejoyfid him againe;
 Thus while in joie he lived and while in paine. 49

Of her behest he had grete comforting,
 Trusting to Troie that she wold make retour,
 Whiche he desired most of al erthly thing,
 For why? she was his onely paramour;
 But whan he sawe passid both day and houre
 Of her gaincome, in sorowe gan oppresse
 His woful herte in care and hevinesse. 56

Of his distresse me nedith nat reherse,
 For worthy Chaucer in that same booke
 In godely termis and in joly verse
 Compilid hath his caris, who will loke
 To breke my slepe anothir quere I toke,
 In which I founde the fatal destiny
 Of faire Creseide, which endid wretchidly. 63

Who wote if all that Chaucer wrate was trewe?
 Nor I wote nat if this narration
 Be authorisid, or forgid of the newe
 Of some poete by his invencion,
 Made to reporte the lamentacion
 And wofull ende of this lusty Creseide,
 And what distresse she was in or she deide. 70

Whan Diomedes had al his appetite
 And more fulfillid of this faire lady
 Upon anothir sette was his delite,
 And sende to her a libel repudy,
 And her excludid fro his company;
 Than desolate she walkid up and down,
 As some men saie in the courte as commune.

O faire Creseide! the floure and a perle
 Of Troie and Grece, how were thou fortunate
 To chaunge in filthe al thy feminite,
 And be with fleshy lust so maculate,
 And go among the Grekes erly and late
 So giglotlike, taking thy foule plesance!
 I have pite the should fall suche mischaunce.

Yet nerthelasse, what er men deme or say
 In scornfull langage of thy brutilnesse,
 I shall excuse as ferforth as I may
 Thy womanhed, thy wisedome, and fairnesse,
 The which Fortune hath put to suche distresse
 As her plesid, and nothing through the gylte
 Of the through wickid langage to be spilde.

This faire lady, on this wise destitute
 Of al comforte and consolatioun,
 Right prively, without selowship or refute,
 Dishevelid, passid out of the toun
 A mile or two unto a mansioun
 Bildid ful gaie, wher her fathir Calchas
 Which than among the Grekis dwelling was.

Whan her he saw the cause he gan enquire
 Of her comming: she said, sighing ful sore,
 For Diomede had gottin his desire
 He woxe wery, and would of me no more.
 Quod Calchas, Doughtir, wepe thou nat therefore;
 Paravinture al comith for the best domage;
 Welcome; to me thou art ful dere a guest.

This olde Calchas, aftir the lawe was tho,
 Was kepir of the temple as a preste
 In whiche Venus and her sonne Cupido
 Were honourid, and his chambre was nest,
 To which Creseide with bale enewed in brest
 Ufid to passe, her prayirs for to saie,
 While at the last upon a solempne daie,

As custome was, the peple ferre and nere
 Before the none unto the temple went
 With sacrifice devout in ther manere;
 But stil Creseide, hevy in her entent,
 Into the church would nat her self present,
 For giving of the peple' any deming
 Of her expulse fro Diomede the King,

But passid into' a secrete oratore,
 Where she might wepe her wofull destiny;
 Behinde her backe she closid fast the dore,
 And on her kneis bare fel down in hie;
 Upon Venus and Cupide angirly
 She cryid out, and sayid in this wise,
 Alas that er I made you sacrifice!

Ye gave me ones a divine responfaile
 That I should be the flour of love in Troie;
 Now am I made an unworthy outwaile,
 And al in care translatid is my joie:
 Who shal me gide? who shal me now convoie,
 Sith I fro Diomed and noble Troilus
 Am clene excluded, abject, odious? 133

O false Cupide! none is to wite but thou,
 And the mothir of Love, that blinde goddace;
 Ye caused me undirstande alwaie and trow
 The fede of love was sown on my face,
 And aie grewe grene thotough your sofle grace;
 But now, alas! that fede with frost is slaine,
 And I fro lovirs leste and all forlaine. 140

Whan this was said down in an extasy,
 Ravished in spirite, in a dreme she fel,
 And by apparaunce herde where she did lie
 Cupide the King tinging a filvir bel,
 Which men might here fro hevin into hel,
 At whose sounde before Cupido aperes
 The seven planets disceding fro the spheres, 147

Whiche hath powir of al thing gene'rable,
 To rule and stire by their gret influence
 Wedir and winde, and course variable;
 And first of al Saturne gave his sentence,
 Whiche gave to Cupide litil reverence,
 But as a boistous chorle in his manere
 Came crabbidly with austrine loke and there. 154

His face fro unseid, his lere was like the lede,
 His tethe chatterid, and shivered with the chine,
 His eyin drouped, whole sonkin in his hede,
 Out at his nose the mildrop fast gan rin,
 With lippis blew; and chekis lene and thin,
 The iseickils that fro his heer doune honged
 Was wondir grete, and as a spere as longe;

Attour his belte his liart lockis laie
 Feltrid unfaire, or fret with frostis hore,
 His garment and his gite ful gay of graie,
 His widrid wede fro him the winde out wore,
 A boustous bowe within his honde he bore,
 Undir his girdle a fashe of felone flains
 Fedrid with ise and hedid with holstains.

Than Jupiter right faire and amiable,
 God of the steris in the firmament,
 And norice to al thing generable,
 Fro his fathir Saturne faire different,
 With burly face, and browis bright and brent,
 Upon his hed a garlonde wondirs gaie
 Of flouris faire, as it had ben in Maie;

His voice was clere, as cristal was his eien,
 As goldin wier so glittring was his here,
 His garment and his gite ful gaie of grene,
 With goldin listis gilte on every gere,
 A burly brandy about his middle he bere,
 And in his right hand he had a groundin spere,
 Of his fathir the wrothe fro us to bere.

Next after him came Mars, the god of ire,
 Of strife, debate, and all discencioun,
 To chide and fight as fierse as any fire,
 In harde harnesse hewmonde and habergioun,
 And on his haunch a rousty fel fauchoun,
 And in his hande he had a rousty sworde,
 Writhing his face, with many angry worde; 189

Shaking his brande before Cupide he come,
 With red visage and grisly glowing eien,
 And at his mouth a blubbir stode of some,
 Like to a bore whetting his tuskis kene,
 Right tulsurelike, but temperaunce in tene,
 An horne he blew with many boultous bragge, 193
 Whiche al this world with warre hath made to wagge.

Than saige Phoebe, lanterne and lampe of light,
 Of man and best both frute and florishing,
 Tendir norice, and banisfair of night,
 And of the worlde causing by his moving
 And influence lif in al erthly thing,
 Without comforte of whom of force to nought
 Must go dyin all that this world hath wrought. 203

As king royall he rode upon a chare,
 The whiche Phaeton sometime gidid unright,
 The brightnesse of his face when it was bare
 Non might beholde for perfsing of his sight,
 This goldin carte with firy bemis bright
 Foure yokid stedis ful different of hewe
 But baite or tiring through the spheris drew. 210

The first was sorde, with mahe as red as rose,
 Callid Eoye in the orient,
 The seconde stede to name bight Ethiofe,
 Whitely and pale, and somdele ascendent,
 The third Pyrois, right hote and fervent,
 The fourth was blak, and callid Phlegoney,
 Which rollith Phoebus down into the se. 217

Venus was there present, that goddes gay,
 Her sonn's quarrel to defende, and make
 Her owne complaint, cladde in a nice aray,
 The one halfe grene, th' othir halfe sable blake,
 White heer as gold, kembit and shede abake,
 But in her face semid grete variaunce,
 Whiles parfite truth and whilis inconstaunce. 224

Undir smiling she was dissimulate,
 Provocative with blinkis amorous,
 And sodainly chaungid and alterate,
 Angry as any serpent venomous,
 Right pungitive with wordis odious;
 Thus variaunt she was, who list take kepe,
 With one eye laugh and with the othir wepe, 231

In tokening that al fleshely paramour,
 Which Venus hath in rule and govirnaunce,
 Is somtime swete, somtime bittir and four,
 Right unstable, and ful of variaunce,
 Mingid with careful joye and falle plesaunce,
 Now hotte, now colde, now blith, now ful of wo,
 Now grene as lese, now widrid and ago. 238

With boke in hand than come Mercurius,
 Right eloquent and ful of rethorie,
 With polite termes and delicious,
 With penne and inke to reporte al redic,
 Setting songis and finging merily,
 His hode was red heclid attour his croun,
 Like til a poete of the olde fasionne.

Boxis he bare with fine electuaries
 And sugrid siropes for digestion,
 Spicis belonging to the potiquares,
 With many wholsome swete confection,
 Doctour in phisike cledde in scarlet gown,
 And furrid wel, as suche one ought to be,
 Honest and gode, and nat a worde couth lie.

Next after him come Lady Cynthia
 The laste of al, and swiftilt in her sphere,
 Of colour blake, buikid with hornis twa,
 And in the night she listith best t'apere,
 Hawe as the leed, of colour nothing elere,
 For al the light she boroweth at her brother
 Titan, for of her selfe she hath non other.

Her gite was gray and ful of spottis blake,
 And on her brest a chorle paintid ful even,
 Bering a bushe of thornis on his bake,
 Whiche for his theft might clime no ner the heven.
 Thus when thei gadrid were the goddis seven
 Mercurius thei chosed with one assent
 To be fore-spekir in the parlyment.

Who had ben there and liking for to here
 His faconde tonge and termis exquisite,
 Of rethorike the praſtike he might lere,
 In breſe ſermon a preignant ſentence write,
 Before Cupide, valing his cappe a lite,
 Speris the cauſe of that vocacioun,
 And he anon ſhewde his entencioun. 273

Lo, quod Cupide, who wel blaſpheme the name
 Of his owne god either in worde or dede,
 To al goddis he doeth bothe loſſe and ſhame,
 And ſhould have bittir painis to his mede;
 I ſaie this by yondir wretche Creſeide,
 The whiche through nſe was ſomtime flour of love;
 Me and my mothir ſhe ſtately can reprove, 280

Saying of her gret infelicite
 I was the cauſe; and my mothir Venus
 She called a blinde goddes and might nat ſe,
 With ſclaundir and defame injurious;
 Thus her living unclene and lechirous
 She would retorte on me and my mother,
 To whom I ſhewde my grace above al other. 287

And ſithe ye are al ſevin delicate
 Participant of divine ſapience,
 This gret injury done to our hie eſtate
 Me thinke with paine we ſhuld make recompence;
 Was ner to goddis done ſuche violence;
 As wel for you as for my ſelfe I ſaie,
 Therefore go help to revenge I you praie. 294

Mercurius to Cupide gave answere,
 And said, Sir King, my counsaile is that ye
 Referre you to the hyist planet here,
 And take to him the lowist of degre,
 The paine of Creseide for to modifie,
 As God Saturne with him take Cynthia,
 I am content (quod he) to take thei twa.

Than thus procedid Saturne and the Monee,
 Whan thei the matir ripely had digest,
 For the dispite to Cupide that she' had done,
 And to Venus opin and manifest,
 In al her life with pain to be oprest,
 And turment fore, with sikentise incurable,
 And to al lovirs be abhominable.

This doleful sentence Saturne toke in hande,
 And passid down where carefull Creseide laie,
 And on her hed he laide a frosty wande,
 Than lausfully on this wise gan he saie,
 Thy grete fairenesse and al thy beauty gaie,
 Thy wanton blode, and eke thy goldin here,
 Here I exclude fro the for evirmere.

I chaunge thy mirth into melancoly,
 Whiche is the mothir of al pensivenesse,
 Thy moistir and thy hete to colde and dry,
 Thine insolence, thy plaie and wantonnesse,
 To grete disese, thy pompe and thy richesse
 Into mortal nede and grete penurie;
 Thou suffre shalt, and as a beggir die.

O cruil Saturne! froward and angrie,
 Harde is thy dome and to malicious,
 Of faire Creseide why hast thou no mercie,
 Whiche was so swete, gentill, and amorous?
 Withdrawe thy sentence and be gracious,
 As you were ner, so shewith through thy dede.
 A wrekeful sentence givin on Creseide. 329

Than Cynthia, whan Saturne past awaie,
 Out of her sete discendid doune blive,
 And red a bill on Creseide where she laie,
 Containing this sentence diffinitive,
 Fro hele of body here I the deprive,
 And to thy likenesse shal be no recure,
 But in dolour thy dayis to endure; 336

Thy cristal eyen mengid with blode I make,
 Thy voice so clere unplefant here and hace,
 Thy lustie lere orspred with spottis blake,
 And lumpis hawe appering in thy face,
 Where thou comist eche man shall fle the place;
 Thus shalt thou go begging fro hous to hous
 With cuppe and clappir, like a Lazarous. 343

This dolie dreame, this ugly visioun,
 Brought till an ende, Creseide fro it awoke,
 And all that courte and convocacioun
 Vanished awaie; than rose she up and toke
 A polished glasse, and her shadowe couth loke,
 And whan she sawe her visage so deformate
 If she in herte were wo I n'ote, God wate. 350

Weping ful fore, Lo! what it is (quod she)
 With froward langage for to move and fere;
 Our crabbid goddes! and so' is sene on me;
 My blaspheming now have I bought ful dere,
 All yerthly joie and mirthe I fet arere;
 Alas this daie, alas this wofull tide,
 Whan I began with my goddis to chide! 357

By this was saied a childe came fro the hal
 'To warne Creseide the suppir was redie,
 First knockid at the dore, and eft couth call,
 Madame, your fathir biddeth you cum in hie,
 He hath marveile so long on grose ye lie,
 And faith your bedis beth to long somdele,
 The goddis wote all your entent full wele. 364

Quod she, Faire child, go to my fathir dere,
 And praie him come to speke with me anon;
 And so he did, and saied, Doughtir, what chere?
 Alas! (quod she) fathir, my mirthe is gone.
 How so? (quod he) and she gan all expone
 As I have told, the vengeance and the wrake
 For her trespas Cupide on her couth take. 371

He lokid on her ugly lepir's face,
 The whiche before was white as lily flour,
 Wringing his handes oftimis saied Alace
 That he had lived to se that wofull hour!
 For he knewe well that there was no focour
 To her siknesse, and that doublid his pain:
 Thus was there care inow betwixt 'hem twain. 378

Whan thei togidir mournid had full lang,
 Quod Creseide, Fathir, I would nat be kende,
 Therefore in secrete wise ye let me gange
 To yon hospitall at the toun's ende,
 And thidir some mete for charite me fended
 To live upon, for all mirth in this yerth
 Is fro me gone, soche is my wickid werth.

Whan in a mantill and a bevir hat,
 With cuppe and clappir, wondir privily
 He' opened a secrete gate, and out therat
 Conveyid her that no man should espie,
 There to a village halfe a mile therebic
 Delivered her in at the spittill hous,
 And daily sente her part of his almous.

Sum knew her well, and sum had no knowlege
 Of her, bicause she was so deformate,
 With bilis blake orspred in her visage,
 And her faire colour fadid and alt'erate;
 Yet thei presumid for her hie regrate
 And still mourning she was of noble kin,
 With bittir will there thei tokin her in.

The daie passid, and Phœbus went to rest,
 The cloudis blake orwhelid all the skie,
 God wote if Creseide were a sorowfull gest,
 Seing that uncouth fare and herborie;
 But mete or drinke she dressid her to lie
 In a darke cornir of the hous alone,
 And on this wise weping she made her mone.

Here foloweth the complaint of Creseide.

O soppe of sorowe sonkin into care!
 O caitife Creseide now and evirmare,
 Gon is thy joie and al thy mirthe in yerth;
 Of all blithnesse now art thou blake and bare;
 There is no salve that helpin maie thy fare;
 Fell is thy fortune, wickid is thy werthe,
 Thy blisse is banished, and thy bale unberde;
 Undir the grete God if I gravin ware
 Wher men of Grece ne yet of Troie might herd!

Where is thy chambir wantonly besene,
 With burly bed and blankits broudid bene,
 Spicis and wine to thy colatioun,
 The cuppis all of gold and silvir shene,
 Thy swete metis servid in platis clene,
 With faverie sauce of a gode fashioun,
 Thy gaie garmentes with many godely gown,
 Thy plefant laune pinnid with goldin pene?
 All is arere thy grete roiall renoun.

Where is thy gardein with thy Grecis gaie,
 And freshe flouris, which the quene Floraie
 Had paintid plefantly in every paine,
 Where thou were wont full merily in Maie
 To walke, and take the dewe by it was daie,
 And here the merle and mavise many one,
 With ladies faire in carolling to gone,
 And se ther roiall renkis in ther raie?

This lepir loge take for thy godely boure,
 And for thy bed take now a bounche of stro,
 For wailid wine and metis thou had tho
 Take mouldid bred, pirate and fidir soure,
 But cuppe and clappir is all now ago. 437

My clere voice and my courtly carolling
 Is ranke as roke, full hidous here and hace,
 Deformid is the figure of my face,
 To loke on it no peple hath liking,
 So sped in sight, I saie with sore sighing
 Lying emong the lepir folke, Alas! 443

O ladies faire of Troie and Grece! attende
 My freile fortune, mine infelicite,
 My grete mischefe which no man can amend,
 And in your minde a mirror make of me,
 As I am now parauenture that ye,
 For al your might, may come to the same ende
 Or ellis worse, if any worse maie be;
 Beware therefore, approchith nere your ende. 451

Nought is your fairnesse but a fading floure,
 Nought is your famous laude and hie honour
 But winde inflate in othir mennis eres,
 Your rosing redde to roting shall retoure,
 Exemple make of me in your memoure,
 Which of soche thingis wofull witnes beres,
 Al welth in yerth as wind awaie it weres;
 Beware therefore, approchich nere your hour. 459

Thus chiding with her dreerie destine
 Weping she woke the night fro ende to ende:
 But all in vain; her dole, her carefull crie,
 Might not remede, ne yet her mourning mend:
 A lepir ladie rose and to her wende,
 And saied; Why spurnist thou again the wall
 To fle thy self, and mende nothing at all? 466

Sith that thy weping but doublith thy wo
 I counsaile the make vertue of a nede,
 Go lerne to clappe thy clappir to and fro,
 And lerne afir the lawe of lepers lede.
 There was no bote, but forthwith than she yede
 Fro place to place, while cold and hungir fore
 Compellid her to be a ranke beggore. 473

That same time of Troie the garnisoun,
 Whiche had the chieftain worthy Troilus
 Through jeopardy of warre had strikin down
 Knightis of Grece in nombir marveilous,
 With grete triumphe and laude victorious
 Again to Troie right roially thei rode
 The waie wher Creseide with the lepir stode 480

Seing that companie come with o steven
 Thei gave a crie, and shoke cuppis, Gode spede,
 Worthie lordis! for Godd's love of heven
 To us lepirs part of your almose dede!
 Than to her crie noble Troilus toke hede,
 Haying pite, nere by the place gan pas
 Where Creseide sat, nat weting what she was. 487

Than upon him she kest up bothe her eyen,
 And with a blinke it come intill his thought
 That he sometime her face before had seyn,
 But she was in soche plight he knew her nought,
 Yet than her loke into his minde he brought,
 The swete visage and amorous blenking
 Of faire Creseide, sometime his own derling.

No wondir was, suppose in mind that he
 Toke her figure so sone; and lo! now why
 The' idea of a thing in case maie be
 So depe enprintid in the fantasie
 That it deludith the wittes outwardly,
 And so appereth in forme and like estate
 Within the minde as it was figurate.

A sparke of love than til his hert couth spring,
 And kindilid his body in a fire
 With hote fevir, in swette, and trembling
 Him toke, while he was redie to expire;
 To bere his shilde his brest begon to tere,
 Within a while he chaungid many' a hewe,
 And nertheles nat one anothir knewe.

For knightly pite and memoriell
 Of faire Creseide a girdill gan he take,
 A purse of golde, and many' a gaie jewell,
 And in the skirte of Creseide down gan shake,
 Than rode awaie, and nat a worde he spake,
 Pensife in herte, while he came to the toune,
 And for grete care oft sith almoste fell doune.

The lepre folke to Creseide then couth draw,
 To se the equall distribucioun
 Of the almose; but whan the golde they sawe
 Eche one to othir privily gan roun,
 And saied, Yon lorde hath more affectioun,
 Hower it be, unto yon Lazarous
 Than to us all, we knewe by his almous. 524

What lorde is yon, (quod she) have ye no fele,
 That doeth to us so grette humanite?
 Yes, quod a lepre man, I knowe him wele,
 Troilus it is, a knight gentle and fre.
 Whan Creseide undirstode that it was he
 Stiffir than stele there sterre a bittir stound 528
 Throughout her hert, and fill doune to the ground.

Whan she, orcome with sighing fore and sad,
 With many' a carefull crie and cold atone,
 Now is my brest with stormic stoundis flad,
 Wrappid in wo, oh wretchfull will of one!
 Than fell in swoun ful oft or she would sone,
 And evir in her swooping cried she thus,
 O false Creseide, and true knight Troilus! 536

Thy love, thy laude, and all thy gentilnesse,
 I comptid small in my prosperite,
 So efflatid I was in wantonnesse,
 And clambe upon the fickle whele so hie,
 All faithe and love I promittid to the
 Was in thy self sikill and furious;
 O false Creseide, and true knight Troilus! 546

For love of me thou kept thy continaunce
 Honest and chaste in conversacion;
 Of all women protectour and defence
 Thou were, and helpid ther opinions
 My minde on fleshy soule affection
 Was enclined to lustis lecherous;
 Fie, false Creseide! o true knight Troilus! 550

Lovirs, beware, and take gode hede about
 Whom that ye love, for whan ye suffre pain
 I let you wit there is right fewe throughout
 Whom ye maie trust to have true love again;
 Prove whan you woll, your labour is in vain;
 Therfore I rede ye take them as ye finde,
 For thei are fad as wedircocke in winde. 557

Bicause I knowe the grete unstableneffe,
 Brittle as glasse, unto my selfe I saie,
 Trusting in othir as grete brutilnesse,
 As inconstaunt, and as untrue of saie;
 Though some be true I wot right fewe ar thei;
 Who findith truthe let him his lady ruse;
 None but my selfe as now I woll accuse. 564

Whan this was said with papir shee fat down,
 And in this manir made her Testament;
 Here I bequeth my corse and carioun
 With wormis and with todie to be rent,
 My cuppe, my clappir, and mine ornament,
 And all my gold, these lepre folke shall have,
 Whan I am dedde to burie me in grave. 571

This roiall ring, set with this rubie redde,
 Whiche Troilus in dowrie to me sende;
 To him again I leue it when I' am dedde;
 To make my careful deth unto him kende;
 Thus I conclude shortly and make an ende;
 My sp'rit I leue to Diane, where she dwelles;
 To walke with her in wast wodis and welles. 578

O Diomedes! thou hast bothe broche and belte
 Whiche Troilus gave me in tokining
 Of his true love; and with that worde she swelt,
 And sone a lepirman toke off the ring,
 Than buried her withoutin taryng;
 To Troilus forthwith the ring he bare,
 And of Creseide the deth he gan declare. 585

When he had herd her grete infirmitie,
 Her legacie, and lamentacioun,
 And how she endid in soche povertie,
 He swelt for wo, and fell doune in a swoun,
 For forowe his herte to brast was boun,
 Sighing full sadly saied I can no more,
 She was untrue, and wo is me therfore. 592

Some saith he made a tombe of marble graie,
 And wrote her name and superscripcioun,
 And laid it on her grave whereas she laie,
 In golden lettirs, containing this resoun;
 Lo! faire ladies, Creseide of Troie coun,
 Somtime comptid the floure of womanhed,
 Under this stone, late lepir, lyith dedde! 599

Now worthy women, in this balade short;
Made for your worship and instruction;
Of charite I monishe and exhorte;
Minge nat your love with false discepcion;
Bere in your minde this fore conclusion
Of faire Greseide as I have saied before;
Sith she is dedde I speke of her no more.
Thus endeth the pitefull and dolorous Tese of faire Greseide.

THE LEGENDE OF GOOD WOMEN.

A Thousand timis I have herd men tell
That there is joie in heven and pain in hell,
And I acord it wele that it is so,
But nathèlesse yet wot I wele also
That there n'is non dwelling in this countre
That eithir bath in heven or hell ibe,
Ne maie of it none othir waies wittin
But as he herd saied or found it writtin,
For by assaie there maie no man it preve
But God forbode but that men shuldin leve

Legende of Good Women] Some ladies in the court took offence at Chaucer's large speeches against the untruth of women, therefore the Queen enjoined him to compile this book in the commendation of sundry maidens and wives who shewed themselves faithful to faithless men. This seems to have been written after The Flower and the Leaf.

Well more thing than thei han seen with eye!
 Men shall nat wein every thing a lie
 But if himself it seeth or els it doeth,
 For God wote thing is nevir the lesse soth
 Though every wight ne maie it not ise.

Bernarde the monke ne faugh not all parde,
 Than motè we to bokis that we finde,
 (Through which the oldè thing is ben in minde)
 And to the doctrine of these oldè wise,
 Yeve credence in every skilfull wise,
 That tellin of these old apprevyd stories
 Of holines, of reigis, of victories,
 Of love, of hate, and othir fondric thinges,
 Of whiche I maie not makin reherfinges;
 And if that oldè bokis were awaie
 Horne were of all remembraunce the kaie.

Well ought us than honourin and beleve
 These bokis there we han none othir preve.

And as for me, though that I can but lite,
 On bokis for to rede I me delite,
 And to 'hem yeve I faithe and full credence,
 And in mine herte have 'hem in revèrence
 So hertily, that there is gamè none
 That fro my bokis makith me to gone,
 But it be seldome, on the holie daie,
 Save certainly whan that the month of Maie
 Is comyn, and I here the foulis sing,
 And that the flouris ginnin for to spring,

Farwell my boke and my devocion.

Now have I than eke this condicion, 40

That above all the flouris in the mede

Than love I moste these flouris white and rede,

Soche that men callin Daifies in our toun;

To them have I so grete affectioun,

As I saied erst, whan comin is the Maie, 45

That in my bedde there dawith me no daie

That I n'am up and walking in the mede

To sene this floure ayenst the sunnè sprede

Whan it uprisith erly by the morowe;

That blisfull sight softinith all my forowe; 50

So glad am I whan that I have presence

Of it to doin it all reverence,

As she that is of all flouris the floure,

Fulfillid of all vertue and honoure, 55

And evir ilike faire and freshe of hewe

As wel in wintir as in summir newe;

This love I evre', and shall uotil I die,

All swere I not of this, I woll nat lie.

There lovid no wight hottir in his life;

And whan that it is eve I rennè blithe, 60

As sone as evir the sunne ginnith west,

To sene this floure how it woll go to rest;

For sere of night, so hatith she derknesse,

Her chere is plainly sprèd in the brightnesse,

Of the sunnè, for there it woll unclothe; 65

Alas that I ne' had Englishe, rime, or prose,

Suffisaunt this flourè to praise aright;
 But helpith ye that han conning and might;
 Ye lovirs, that can make of sentiment;
 In this case ought ye to be diligent
 To forthrin me somwhat in my labour,
 Whether ye ben with the Lefe or the Flour,
 For well I wote that ye han here beforne
 Of making ropen and lad awaie the corne,
 And I come aftir glening here and there,
 And am full glad if I maie finde an ere
 Of any godely worde that ye han lefte;
 And though it happe me to reherfin eft
 That ye han in your freshe songis saied
 Forberith me, and beth not ill apaied,
 Sith that ye se I doe it in the honour
 Of Love, and eke in service of the flour,
 Whom that I serve as I have wit or might;
 She is the clerenesse and the very light
 That in this derke world me windith and ledeth;
 The hert within my wofull brest you dredeth
 And loveth so fore, that ye ben verily
 The maistris of my wit and nothing I;
 My worde, my workes, is knit so in your honde,
 That as an harpe obeyith to the honde,
 And makith sounne aftir his fingiring,
 Right so mowe ye out of mine herte bring
 Soch voice right as you list to laugh or pain;
 Be ye my guide and ladie soverain:

As to mine yerthly god to you I call 95
 Bothe in this werke and my sorowis all.
 But wherfore that I spake to yeve credence
 To old stories, and doen 'hem revèrence,
 And that men mustin morè thing bileve
 Than men may sene at eye or ellis preve, 100
 That shall I sein whan that I se my time;
 I maie not all at onis speke in rime;
 My busie ghost, that thurslith alwaie newe
 To sene this flour so yong, so freshe of hewe,
 Constrainid me with so gredie desire 105
 That in mine herte I felin yet the fire
 That madè me to rise er it were daie,
 And this was now the first morowe of Maie,
 With dredfull herte and glad devocion
 For to ben at the resurreccion 110
 Of this flourè, whan that it should unclofe
 Again the sunne, that rose as redde as rose,
 That in the brest was of the best that daie
 That Agenor's doughtir ladde awaie;
 And doune on knees anon right I me sette, 115
 And as I could this freshe flour I grette,
 Kneling alwaie till it unclofid was
 Upon the small, and soft, and swete gras,
 That was with flouris swete embroudid al,
 Of soche swetnesse and soche odour oer all 120
 That for to spekin of gomme, herbe, or tre,
 Comparison maie none imakid be,

For it surmountith plainly all odoures;
 And of riche beaute the most gaye of floures.
 Forgottin had the yerth his pore estate 125
 Of wintir, that him nakid made and mate;
 And with his sworde of colde so sore greved;
 Now hath the atempre sonne al that releved
 That nakid was, and clad it newe again;
 The smallè foulis, of the seson fain, 130
 That of the panter and the net ben scaped,
 Upon the foulir that 'hem made awhaped
 In wintir, and distroyid had ther brode,
 In his dispite them thought it did 'hem gode
 To sing of him, and in ther song dispise 135
 The foulè chorle that for his covitise
 Had 'hem betrayid with his sophistrie;
 This was ther song; The foulir we defie,
 And all his crafte: and some yfongin clere 140
 Lays of love, that joie it was to here,
 In worshipping and praising of her make,
 And for the newè blisfull s-mir's sake;
 Upon the braunchis full of blofomis soft
 In ther delits thei tournid 'hem full oft,
 And songin, Blissid be Sainct Valentine! 145
 For on his daie I chese you to be mine,
 Withoutip repenting, mine hertè swete!
 And therwithall their beakis gonnin mete,
 Yelding honour and humble obeisaunce
 To Love, and didden ther othir observaunce 150

That longith unto love and to nature;
 Constrewe that as you list; I doe no cure;
 And tho that had doin unkindenesse,
 As doeth the tidise for newefangelnesse,
 Besoughtin mercie of ther trespassing,
 And humilly songin ther repenting,
 And sworin on the blofomis to be true,
 So that ther makis would upon 'hem rue;
 And at the last thei madin ther acorde,
 All found thei Daungir for the time a lorde,
 Yet Pite thorough his strong gentill might
 Feryave, and made mercie passin right
 Through Innocence and rulid Curtisie;
 But I ne clept nat innocence folie,
 Ne false pite, for vertue is the mene,
 As Ethicke saieth, in soche manir I mene;
 And thus these foulis, voide of all malice,
 Accordidin to love, and lastin vice
 Of hate, and songin all of one acorde,
 Welcome Sommir, our govirnour and lorde;
 And Zephyrus and Flora gentilly
 Yave to the flouris soft and tendirly
 Ther sotè breth, and made 'hem for to sprede,
 As god and goddesse of the flourie mede,
 In whiche me thought I mightè daie by daie
 Dwellin alwaie the joly monthe of Maie
 Withoutin slepe, withoutin mete or drinke;
 Adoune full softly I gan to sinke,

And lening on my elbowe and my side
 The longè daie I shope me for to abide,
 For nothing ellis, and I shall nat lie,
 But for to lokin upon the Daisie,
 That well by reson men it callè maie
 The Daisie, or els the eye of the daie,
 The emprise, and the floure of flouris all:
 I praie to God that faire mote she fall,
 And all that lovin flouris for her sake!
 But nathèlessè ne wene hat that I make
 In praising of the Floure again the Lefe
 No more than of the corne again the shefe,
 For as to me n'is levir none ne lother;
 I n'am withholdin yet with neithir nother,
 Nel I n'ot who servith Lefe ne who the Floure;
 Well broukin thei ther service or laboure;
 For this thing is all of anothir tonne,
 Of old storie, er sothe thing was begonne.
 Whan that the sunne out of the south gan west,
 And thât this floure gan close and gon to rest,
 For derknes of the night the which she drede,
 Home to mine house full swiftly I me spede
 To gone to rest, and erly for to rise
 To sene this floure to sprede as I devise;
 And in a litle herbir that I have,
 That benchid was of turvis freshe igrave,
 I bad men shouldin me my couchè make;
 For deinte of the newè sommir's sake

I had 'hem strawin flouris on my bedde:
 When I was laied and had mine eyin hedde
 I fell aslepe, and slept an houre or two,
 Me met how I laie in the midowe thow
 To sene this floure, that I love so and drede,
 And from aseris came walking in the mede
 The god of Love, and in his hande a quene,
 And she was glad in roiall habite grene,
 A fret of gold she had next her here,
 And upon that a white coroune she bere
 With flourounis small, and, I shall nat lie,
 For all the world right as a Daisie
 Icrounid is, with whitè levis lite,
 So were the florouns of her croune white,
 For of o perlè fine orientall
 Her whitè coroune was imakid all,
 For which the white coroune above the grene,
 Ymade her like a Daisie for to sene,
 Confidrid eke her fret of gold above;
 Iclothid was this mightie god of Love
 In filke embroidid, full of grenè greves,
 In whiche there was a fret of red rose leves,
 The freshest sens the worlde was first begon;
 His gilt here was ycrounid with a son
 In stede of gold, for hevinesse and weight,
 Therwith me thought his face shone so bright,
 That well unniethis might I him behold,
 And in his hand niethought I sawe him hold

Two fire darts as the gledes rede, 235
 And angelike his wingis sawe I sprede;
 And all be that men sain that blinde is he,
 Al gatis me thought that he might welcfe,
 For sternly on me he gan behold,
 So that his loking doeth min hertè cold; 240
 And by the hande he helde this noble quene,
 Crounid with white, and clothid al in grene,
 So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
 That in this worlde though that men woldin seke,
 Halfe her beaute ne shouldin thei nat finde;
 In cature that yformid is by Kinde,
 And therefore maie I sain, as thinkith me,
 This song in praising of this ladie fre:

Hide, Absolon, thy giltè tressis clere,
 Hester, laie thou thy mekenesse all adoun,
 Hide, Jonathas, all thy frendly manere,
 Penelope, and Marcia Catoun,
 Make of your wifehode no comparifoun,
 Hide ye your beauties, I soude and Helein,
 My ladie cometh, that all this maie distain. 255

Thy faire bodie ne let it not appere
 Lavine, and thou Lacrece of Romè toun,
 And Polyxene, that boughtin love so dere,
 And Cleopatra, with all thy passioun,
 Hide ye your trouthe of love and your renoun, 260
 And thou Thisbe, that hast of love soche pain,
 My ladie cometh, that all this maie distain.

Hero, Dido, Laodomia, isere,
And Phyllis hanging for Demophoon,
And Canace, espyd by thy chere,
Hypsipyle, betrayid by Jafon,
Makith of your trowth neither boste ne foun,
Nor Hypermnestra or Ariadne, ye twaine,
My ladie cometh, that all this maie distain.

This balade maie full well isongin be,
As I have said erst, by my ladie fre,
For certainly all these mowe not suffice
To apperin with my ladie in no wise,
For as the sunnè woll the fire distain,
So passith all my ladie soverain,
That is so gode, so faire, so debonaire,
I praie to God that evir fall her faire!
For ne had comfort ben of her presence
I had ben dedde without any defence
For drede of Lov's wordis and his chere,
As whan time is hereaftir ye shall here.

Behinde this god of Love upon the grene
I sawe coming of ladyis ninetene,
In roiall habit, a full esie pace,
And astir them of women soche a trace
That sene that God Adam had made of yerth
The thirde part of mankinde, or the fersth,
Ne wende I nat by possibilite
Had evir in this wide worlde ibe,

And true of love these women were echon: 290
 Now whether was that a wondir thing or non,
 That right anon as that thei gonne espie
 This flour whiche that I clepe the Dāise,
 Full sodainly thei stint in all at ones,
 And knelid doune as it were for the nones, 295
 And songin with o voice, *Hele and honour*
To trouth of womanbede, and to this flour,
That berith our aldir prife in figuring,
Her white coroune berith the witnesing?
 And with that worde a compas environ 300
 Thei sittin 'hem full softly adoun:
 First sat the god of Love, and sith his quene,
 With the white coroune, yclad all in grene,
 And sithin all the remnaunt by and by,
 As thei were of estate, full curtisly; 305
 Ne nat a worde was spokin in the place
 The mountenance of a furlong waie of space.

I kneling by this flour in gode entent
 Abode to knowin what this peple ment
 As still as any stone, till at the last 310
 This god of Love on me his eyin cast,
 And said, Who knelith there? and I answerd
 Unto his asking whan that I it herde,
 And saied, Sir, It am I, and come him nere,
 And salued him. (Quod he) What doest thou here
 So nigh mine owne flour so boldily? 316
 It werin bettir worthy truilly

A worme to nighin nere my flour than thou.
 And why, Sir, (quod I) and it likith you?
 For thou (quod he) art therto nothing able;
 It is my relike digne and delitable,
 And thou my so, and all my folke werriest,
 And of mine old servauntis thou mislaigest,
 And hindrist hem with thy translation;
 And lettist folke from ther devocion
 To servin me, and holdist it folie
 To servin Love; thou maicst it pat denie,
 For in plain text, withhoutin nede of glose,
 Thou' hast translatid The Romaunt of the Rose,
 That is an heresie ayenst my lawe,
 And makist wise folke fro me to withdrawe;
 And of Creseide thou hast saide as the list,
 That makith men to women lesse to triste,
 That ben as trewe as er was any stele:
 Of thine answere avisin the right wele,
 For though that thou renyid hast my lawe,
 As othir wretchis have done many a daie,
 By Seint Venus, which that my mothir is,
 If that thou live thou shalt repentin this,
 So cruilly that it shal wel be sene,
 Tho spake this lady, clothid all in grene,
 And sayid, God, right of your curtisie
 Ye mote herkin if that he can replie
 Ayenst al this that ye have to him meved;
 A God ne shouldè nat be thus agreved,

But of his deite he shal be stable,
 And thet to gracious and merciabie,
 And if ye n'ere a god that knowin all
 Than might it be, as I you tellin shall,
 This man to you maie falsely ben accused,
 That as by right him oughtin ben excused,
 For in your court is many' a losengeour,
 And many a queint totoler accusour
 That tabouren in your eris many' a foun
 Right astir ther imaginacioun,
 To have your daliaunce, and for envy;
 These ben the causis, and, I shal nat lie,
 Envie is lave'ndir of the court alwaie,
 For she ne partith neithir night ne daie
 Out of the house of Cæsar, thus saith Dant,
 Who so that goeth algate she wol nat want.

And eke peraunter for this man is nice
 He mightin done it, gelling no malice,
 But for he usith thingis for to make
 Him reckith nought of what matir he take,
 Or him was bodin makin thilkè twey
 Of some persone, and durst it nat withsey;
 Or him repentith uttirly of this,
 He ne' hath nat done so grevously amis
 To translatin that oldè clerkis writen,
 As though that he of malice would enditen
 Dispite of Love, and had himselfe it wrought;
 This should a rightwise lorde have in his thought,

And nat be like tirauntes of Lombardie,
 That han no rewarde but at tirannie; 375
 For he that king or lorde is naturel,
 Him ought not be a tiraunt ne cruel
 As a fermour, to done the harme he can,
 He must thinkin it is his liegē man,
 As is his trefour, and his golde in cofer, 380
 This is the sentence of the philosopher;
 A kinge to kepe his liagis in justice,
 Withoutin doute that is his office,
 Al wol he kepe his lordes in ther degre,
 As it is right and skil that thei shulde be 385
 Enhaunfid and honourid, and most dere;
 For thei ben halfegoddis in this world here,
 Yet mote he done both right to pore and riche,
 Al be that ther estate be nath both liche,
 And have of povir folke compassion; 390
 For lo the gentil kinde of the lion!
 For whan a flie offendith him or biteth
 He with his taile awaie the flie yfmiteth
 Al esily, for of his gentèrie
 Him deinith nat to wreke him on a flie, 395
 As doeth a curre or els anothir best;
 In noble corage ought to ben arest,
 And wayin every thing by equite,
 And have regarde unto his owne degre;
 For, Sir, it is no maistrise for a lorde 400
 To dampne a man without answere of word,

And for a lorde that is ful foule to use;
 And it so be he maie him nat excuse,
 But alkith mercy with a dredeful herte,
 And profirith him right in his bare sherte
 To ben right at your ownè jugement,
 Than ought a god by short avisement
 Confidre' his owne honour and his trespac,
 For sith no cause of deth lieth in this case
 You ought to ben the lightlier merciable:
 Lettith your ire, and beth somwhat tretable;
 The man hath servid you of his conninges,
 And forthrid well your law in his makinges;
 Al be it that he can nat wel endite,
 Yet hath he madin leudè folke delite
 To servin you, in preising of your name;
 He made the boke that hight The House of Fame,
 And eke The Deth of Blaunchè the Duchesse,
 And The' Parliment of Foulis, as I gesse,
 And al The Love of Palamon and Arcite,
 Of Thebis, though the storie is knowen lite,
 And many an hymne for your holy daies,
 That hightin Balades, Rondils, Virèlaies;
 And for to speke of othir holinesse,
 He hath in profè translatid Boece,
 And made The Life also of Saint Cecile,
 He madin also, gon is a grete while,
 Origines upon the Maudelaine,
 Him oughain now to have the lesè paine;

He hath made many' a ley and many' a thing. 43b

Now as ye be a god and eke a king,
I your Alceste, whilom Quene of Thrace,
I askè you this man right of your grace
That ye him nevir hurte in al his live,
And he shal swerin to you, and that blive,
He shal ner more agiltin in this wife,
But shal makin as ye wol him devise
Of women trewe in loving al their life,
Where so ye wol of maidin or of wife,
And forthrin you as muche as he misseide
Or in The Rose or ellis in Creseide.
The god of Love answerde her thus anon;
Madame, (quod he) it is so longe agon
That I you knew so charitable' and trewe,
That nevir yet fithin the worlde was newe
To me ne founde I bettir none than ye;
If that I wol yfavin my degre
I may nor wol nat werne your request;
All lieth in you; doth with him as you lest.

I al foryeve withoutin lengir space,
For who so yeveth a yeste or doth a grace
Do it betime, his thanke shal be the more,
And demith ye what he shal do therefore.

Go, thankith now my lady here (quod he.)
I rose, and doun I set me on my kne,
And sayid thus; Madame, the God above
For yeldè you that ye the god of Love

Have makid me his wrathè to foryeve,
 And give me grace so longè for to live
 That I maie know sothily what ye be 460
 That have me holpen and put in this degre!
 But trewily I wende as in this caas
 Nought have agilte ne done to Love trespas;
 For why? a trewè man withoutin drede
 Hath nat to partin with a thev'is dede: 465

Ne a trewe lovir ought me not to blame
 Though that I speke a false lovir some shame,
 Thei oughtin rather with me for to holde
 For that I of Creseidè wrote or tolde,
 Or of the Rose; what so mine author ment 470
 Algatis God wote it was mine entent
 To forthrin trouth in love, and it cherice,
 And to ben ware fro falsenesse and fro vice,
 By whiche ensample this was my mening.

And she answerde, Let be thine arguing, 475
 For Love ne wol not countirpletid be
 In right ne wrong, and lerne that of me:
 Thou hast thy grace, and holde the right therto;
 Now woll I faine what penaunce thou shalt do
 For thy trespas: Understandith it here 480
 Thou shalt while that thou livist yere by yere
 The mostè partie of thy timè spende
 In making of a glorious Legende
 Of Gode Women, both maidinis and wives,
 That werin trewe in loving all ther lives, 485

And tellin of false men that 'hem betraien;
 That al ther life ne do nat but assaien
 How many women thei maie done a shame;
 For in your world that is nat holde a game;
 And though that the like nat a lovir be
 Speke wel of love, this penaunce yeve I the,
 And to the god of Love I shal so praie
 That he shal charge his servantes by' any waie
 To forthrin the, and wel thy labour quite;
 Go now thy waie, this penaunce is but lite;
 And when this boke is made yeve it the Quene
 On my behalfe, at Eltham or at Shene:
 The god of Love gan smile, and than he saide;
 Wost thou (quod he) wher this be wife or maide,
 Or quene or countesse, or of what degre,
 That hath so litill penaunce yevin the,
 That hast deservid sorely for to smerte
 But pite rennith sone in gentle herte,
 That maist thou sene; she kithith what she is.
 And I answerde, Naie, Sir, so have I blis,
 No more but that I se wel she is gode.
 That is a trewe talè by mine hode
 (Quod Love) and that thou knowist wel parde,
 If it be so that thou avise the:
 Hast thou nat in a bokè in thy cheste
 The gretè godenesse of the Quene Alcesse,
 That turnid was into a Däisie,
 She that for her husbondè chese to die,

And eke to gone to hell rathir than he,

And Hercules rescuid her parde, 515

And brought her out of hel againe to blis?

And I answerde againe, and sayid, Yes;

Now know I her; and is this gode Alceste,

The Däiesie, and mine owne hert'is reste?

Now fele I wel the godenesse of this wife, 520

That both aftir her deth and in her life

Her gretè bounte doublich her renoun,

Wel hath she quit me mine affectioun

That I have to her flour the Däiesie;

No wondir is though Jove her stellifie, 525

Astellith Agaton, for her godenesse,

Her white corowne berith of it witnesse,

For all so many virtuis had she

As smal florounis in her corowne be;

In remembraunce of her and in honour 530

Cybilla made the Daiesie, and the flour

Icrownid al with white, as men maie fe,

And Mars yave her a corown red parde,

In stede of rubies set among the white;

Therwith this quene woxe red for shame alite 535

Whan she was praisid so in her presence.

Than sayid Love, A ful grete negligence

Was it to the, that ilkè time thou made

(*Hide, Absolon, thy tressis*) in balade,

That thou forgette her in thy songe to sette, 540

Sith that thou art so gretly in her dette,

And wotist wel that kalender is she
 To any woman that wol lovir be,
 For she taught all the crafte of trewe loving,
 And namily of wisehode the living, 545
 And all the bondis that she ought to kepe;
 Thy litil witte was thilkè time aslepe;
 But now I chargè the upon thy life
 That in thy Legende thou make of this wise,
 Whan thou hast othir smale imade before; 550
 And fare now wel, I chargè the no more,
 But er I go this muche I wol the tel,
 Ne shal no trewè lovir come in hel.

These othir ladies sitting here arowe
 Ben in my balade, if thou const 'hem knowe, 555
 And in thy bokis al thou shalt 'hem finde,
 Have 'hem now in thy Legende al in minde,
 I mene of them that ben in thy knowing,
 For here ben twenty thousande mo sitting
 Than that thou knowist, and gode women al, 560
 And trewe of love; for ought that maie besal;
 Makith the metris of 'hem as the leste,
 I mote gone home, the sunnè drawith weste,
 To Paradis, with al this companie,
 And servin alwaie the fresh Däisie: 565
 At Cleopatra' I wol that thou beginne,
 And so forthe, and my love so shalt thou winne;
 For let se now what man that lovir be
 Wol done so strong a paine for love as she.

I wote wel that thou maieſt not al it time 570
 That ſuche loviris diddin in ther time;
 It were to longe to redin and to here;
 Suffiſith me thou make in this manere,
 That thou reherce of al ther life the grete,
 Aſtir theſe olde authors liſte for to trete; 575
 For who ſo ſhal ſo many a ſtorie tel
 Sey ſhortly, or he ſhal to longe dwell.
 And with that worde my bokis gan I take,
 And right thus on my Legende gan I make. 579

Thus endeth the Prologue.

HERE BEGINNETH

THE LEGENDE OF CLEOPATRA

QUENE OF EGYPTE.

AFTER the dethe of Ptolemy the King,
 That all Egypt had in his governing,
 Reignid his ſuſtir Quene Cleopatras,
 Til on a time biſel there ſuche a caas
 That out of Rome was ſent a ſenatour
 To conquerin relmis, and bring honour
 Unto the toun of Rome, as was uſaunce,
 To have the worlde at her obeifaunce,
 And, ſothe to ſaie, Antonius was his name.
 So ſil it, as Fortune him ought a ſhame, 10
 Whan he was fallin in proſperite
 Rebel unto the toun of Rome is he,
 And or al this the ſuſtir of Caſare
 He left her falſely, er that ſhe was ware,

And would algatis han anothir wife,
 For whiche he toke with Rome and Cæsar strife.
 Nathelesse, for sothe this ilkè senatour
 Was a ful worthy gentil werriour,
 And of his deth it was ful grete damage;
 But Love had brought this man in such a rage,
 And him so narrow boundin in his laas,
 And al for the love of Cleopatras,
 That al the world he set at no value;
 Him thought there was nothing to him so due
 As Cleopatras for to love and serve;
 Him roughtè nat in armis for to sterve
 In the defence of her and of her right.

This noble Quene eke lovid so this knight
 Through his deserte and for his chivalrie,
 As certainlie, but if that bokis lie,
 He was of person and of gentilnesse,
 And of discretion and of hardinesse,
 Worthy to any wight that livin maie,
 And she was faire as is the rose in Maie;
 And, for to makin shorte is the best,
 She woxe his wife, and had him as her lest.
 The wedding and the festè to devise,
 To me that have itakin suche emprise
 Of so many a storie for to make,
 It were to longe, lest that I shoulde slake
 Of thing that berith more effecte and charge,
 For men maie ovrlade a shippe or barge;

And forthy to effecte than wol I skippe,
And al the remnaunt I wol let it slippe.

Octavian, that wode was of this dede,
Shope him an hoste on Antony to lede,
Al uttirly for his destruccion,
With stoute Romainis, cruil as lion:
To ship thei went; and thus I let 'hem faile.

Antonius was ware, and wol not faile
To metin with these Romaines if he maie,
Toke eke his rede, and both upon a daie
His wife and he, and al his host, forth went
To ship anone; no lengir thei ne stent,
And in the se it happid 'hem to mete;
Up goeth the trumpe, and for to shoute and shete,
And painin 'hem to set on with the sunne;
With grisly sounne out goith the grete gonne,
And hertily thei hurtlin al at ones,
And fro the top doune comith the grete stones,
In goth the grapinel so ful of crokes
Among the ropis ran the shering hokes,
In with the polaxe presith he and he,
Behinde the masse beginnith he to fle,
And out againe, and drivith him or borde;
He stickith him upon his sper's orde,
He rent the saile with hokis like a sithe,
He bringeth the cuppe, and biddith 'hem be blith,
He pourith pesen upon the hatchis slider,
With pottis ful of lime thei gon togider,

And thus the longè daie in fight thei spende,
 Til at the last, as every thing hath ende,
 Antonius is shent and put to flight,
 And al his folke to go that best go might,
 Fleeth eke the Quene, with al her purple saile,
 For strokis whiche that went as thicke as hail;
 No wondir was, she might it nat endure
 And whan Antony sawe that avinture,
 Alas (quod he) the daie that I was borne!
 My worship in this daie thus have I lorne,
 And for dispaire out of his witte he sterre,
 And rose himsef anon throughout the herte
 Er that he ferthir went out of the place:
 His wife, that could of Cæsar have no grace,
 To Egypt fled for drede and for distresse;
 But herkenith, ye that spekin of kindenesse,
 Ye men that falsely swerin many' an othe
 That ye wol die if that your love be wrothe,
 Here maie ye sene of women such a trouthe
 This woful Cleopatre' had made suche routh
 That there n'is tongè none that maie it tel,
 But on the' morowe she wol no lengir dwel,
 But made her subtil werkmen make a shrine
 Of al the rubies and the stonis fine
 In al Egypt which that she coude espie,
 And she put ful the shrine of spicèrie,
 And lette the corse enbaume, and forth she sette
 This ded corse, and she in the shrine it shette;

And next the shrine a pit than doth she grave,
 And al the serpentis that she might have 100
 She put 'hem in that grave, and thus she seide;
 Now love, to whom my sorowful hert obeide
 So ferforthly, that fro that blisful hour
 That I you swore to ben al frely your,
 I mene you, Antonius, my knight, 105
 That nevir waking in the daie or night
 Ye n'ere out of mine hert'is remembraunce,
 For wele or wo, for carole or for daunce,
 And in my selfe this covenant made I tho,
 That right suche as ye feltin, wele or wo, 110
 As ferforth as it in my powir laie,
 Unreprovable' unto my wisehode aie,
 The same would I felin in life or dethe,
 And thilkē covenant while me lastith brethe
 I wol fulfil, and that shal wel be sene, 115
 Was ner unto her love a trewir quene;
 And with that word nakid, with ful gode hert,
 Among the serpentis in the pitte she flect,
 And therē she chese to have her burying:
 Anone the nedirs gonne her for to sting, 120
 And she her deth recevith with gode chere,
 For love of Antony that was her dere;
 And this is storial sothe, it is no fable.
 Now er I finde a man thus trewe and stable,
 And wol for love his deth so frely take,
 I praie God let our hedis nevir ake! 126

Here endeth the Legende of Cleopatra.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF THISBE

OF BABYLONE.

Ar Babylonè whilom fil it thus,
The whiche toun the Quene Simiramus
Let dichin al about, and wallis make
Full hie of hardè tilis wel ibake:
There werin dwelling in this noble toun
Two lordis which that were of grete renoun,
And wonidin so nigh upon a grene
That there n'as but a stone wal 'hem bitwene,
As oft in grete tounis is the wonne,
And, sothe to saine, that one man had a sonne
Of al that londe one of the lustyist,
That othir had a doughtir the fairist
That estward in the world was tho dwelling;
The name of everiche gan to othir spring,
By women that were neighbouris aboute,
For in that countre yet withoutin doute
Maidinis ben ikepte for jelousie
Ful straitely, lest thei diddin some folie.

This yongè man was clepid Pyramus,
And Thisbe hight the maide (Naso saith thus)
And thus by reporte was ther name ishove,
That as thei woxe in age so woxe ther love;
And certaine, as by reson of ther age,
Ther might have ben betwixt 'hem mariage,

But that ther fathirs n'olde it nat assent; 25
 And thei in love ylike fore bothè brent
 That none of al ther frendis might it lette,
 But privily somtimis yet thei mette
 By sleight, and spakin some of ther desire,
 As wrie the glede and hottir is the fire; 30
 Forbid a love and it' is ten-times so wode.

This wal which that betwixt 'hem both ystode
 Was cloven atwo right fro the top adoun
 Of oldè time of his foundacioun,
 But yet this clifte was so narow and lite 35
 It was nat fenè, (dere inough a mite)
 But what is that that love can not espie?
 Ye lovirs two, if that I shal nat lie,
 Ye foundin first this litle narowe clifte,
 And with a sounde as softe as any shrifte 40
 Thei let ther wordis through the cliftè pace,
 And toldin, while that thei stoden in the place,
 Al ther complaint of love and al ther wo,
 At evèry time whan thei durstin so.

Upon that one side of the wal stode he, 45
 And on that other side stode Thisbe,
 The swete sounne of othir to receve,
 And thus ther wardeins wouldin thei disceve,
 And every daie this wal thei wouldin threte,
 And wish to God that it were down ibete; 50
 Thus would thei faine, Alas! thou wickid wal,
 Thorough thine envie thou us lettist al;

Why n'ilt thou cleve or fallin al atwo?
 Or at the lestè, but thou wouldist so,
 Yet wouldist thou but onis let us mete,
 Or onis that we mightin kissin fwete,
 Than were we curid of our caris colde;
 But nathèlesse yet be we to the holde,
 In as muche as thou suffrist for to gone
 Our wordis through thy lime and eke thy stone, 60
 Yet oughtin we with the ben wel apaide.
 And whan these idil wordis werin saide
 The coldè wal thei woldin kisse of stone,
 And take ther leue, and forth thei woldin gone,
 And this was gladly in the evintide, 65
 Or wondir erly, lest men it espide:
 And longè time thei wrought in this manere,
 Til on a daie, whan Phœbus gan to clere,
 Aurora with the firemis of her hete
 Had dryid up the dewe of herbis wete, 70
 Unto this clifte, as it was wonte to be,
 Come Pyramus, and aftir come Thisbe,
 And plightin trouth right fully in ther faie,
 That ilkè samè night to stele awaie,
 And to begile ther wardeins everichone, 75
 And forth out of the cite for to gone;
 And for the feldis ben so brode and wide
 For to metin in o place at o tide
 Thei settin markes ther metingis should be
 There King Ninus was graven undir a tre, 80

For olde Painims, that idollis heried,
 Ufidiu tho in feldis to ben beried;
 And faste by his gravè was a wel,
 And shortily of this tale for to tel,
 This covenant was affirmid wondir fast,
 And longe 'hem thoughtin that the sonnè last,
 That it n'ere gone undir the se adoun.
 This Thisbe hath so grete affectioun,
 And so grete liking Pyramus to se,
 That whan she sawe her timè might ybe
 At night she stak awaie ful privily,
 With her face iwimplid full subtilly,
 For al her frendis (for to save her trouthe)
 She hath forsake, alas! and that is routh,
 That eyir woman would ybe so trewe
 To trustin man but she the bet him knewe;
 And to the tre she goeth a ful gode pace,
 For love made her so hardy in this case,
 And by the welle adoun she gan her dresse.
 Alas! than comith a wilde lionesse
 Out of the wode, withoutin more arest,
 With blode mouthe of strangling of a best,
 To drinkin of the wel there as she sat;
 And whan that Thisbe had espyid that
 She rist her up with a ful drery herte,
 And in a cave with dredful fote she sterte,
 For by the mone she sawe it wel withall,
 And as she ran her wimple let she fall,

And toke none hede, so fore she was awhaped;
 And eke so glad for that she was escaped;
 And thus she sat and turkith wondir still,
 Whan that this lionesse hath dronke her fill
 Aboutin the well gan she for to winde,
 And right anon the wimple gan she finde,
 And with her bloody mouthe it al to rente;
 Whan this was done no lengir she ne stente,
 But to the wode her way than hath she nome.

And at the last this Pyramus is come,
 But al to longe, alas! at home was he;
 The monè shone, men mightin wel ife;
 And in his waie, as that he come ful fast,
 His eyin to the grounde adoun he cast,
 And in the fonde, as he behelde adoun,
 He saw the steppis brode of a lioun,
 And in his hert he sodainly agrose,
 And pale he wexte, therwith his hert arofe,
 And nere he came, and founde the wimple torne;
 Alas (quod he) the daie that I was borne!
 This o night wol both us loviris fle;
 How should I askin mercy of Thisbe
 Whan I am he that have you slaine? alas!
 My biding hath you slainè in this caas:
 Alas! to bidde a woman gone by night
 In placè there as perill fallin might,
 And I so slowe: alas! I ne had be
 Here in this place a furlonge waie crye.

Now what lioun that is in this forest
 My body mote he rentin, or what best
 That wilde is, gnawin mote he now mine herte.
 And with that worde he to the wimple sterre, 140
 And kiste it ofte, and wepte on it ful fore,
 And said, Wimple, alas! there n'is no more,
 But thou shalt fele as wel the blode of me
 As thou hast felte the bleding of Thisbe:
 And with that worde he smote him to the herte, 145
 The blode out of the wounde as brode asterte
 As watir, whan the conduite brokin is.
 Now Thisbe, which that ne wist not of this,
 But sitting in her drede she thoughtè thus,
 Yf it so fallin that my Pyramus 150
 Be comen hithir, and may me nat finde,
 He maie me holdin false and eke unkinde.
 And out she cometh, and astir him gan spien
 Both with her hertè and eke with her eien,
 And thought I wol him tellin of my drede 155
 Both of the lionesse and of my dede;
 And at the last her love than hath she founde
 Ybeting with his helis on the grounde
 Al bloody', and therewithal abacke she sterre,
 And like the wawis quappe began her herte, 160
 And pale as boxe she woxe, and in a throwe
 Avifid her, and gan him wel to knowe,
 That it was Pyramus, her hertè dere:
 O! who could writin whiche a dedly chere

Hath Thisbe now! and how her here she reht, 165
 And how she gan her selfin to turment,
 And how she lieth and swounith on the ground,
 And how she wept of teris ful his wounde,
 How medlith she his blode with her complaint,
 How with her blod her selvin gan she paint, 170
 How clippith she the red ded corse, alas!
 How doth this woful Thisbe in this caas,
 How kiffith she his frosty mouthe so colde!
 Who hath don this? and who hath ben so bolde
 To fleen my life? o! speke my Pyramus, 175
 I am thy Thisbe that the callith thus;
 And therewithal she listith up his hed.

This wofull man, that was nat fully ded,
 Whan that he herde the name of Thisbe crien,
 On her he cast his hevy dedly eyen,
 And down againe, and yeldith up the gost,
 Thisbe rist up withoutin noife or host,
 And saw her wimple and his empty sheth,
 And eke his swerde, that him hath don to deth,
 Than spake she thus; My woful hande (quod she)
 Is stronge inough in suche a werke to me,
 For love shal yeve me strength and hardinesse
 To make my wounde large inough I gesse;
 I wol the folowen ded, and I wol be
 Felawe and cause eke of thy deth, (quod she) 190
 And though that nothing save the deth only
 Might the fro me departin trewily,

Thou shalt no more departin now fro me
Than fro the deth, for I wol go with the.

And now, ye wretchid jelouse fathirs our,
We that ywerin whilom childrin your,
We prayin you withoutin more envie
That in o grave we both motin lie,
Sens love hath brought us to this pitous ende:
And rightwise God to every lovir sende,
That lovith trewly, more prosperite
Than evir had Pyramus and Thisbe,
And let no gentil woman her assure
To puttin her in suche an avinture:
But God forbid but that a woman can

Ben as true and as loving as a man,
And for my part I shal anon it kith;
And with that word his sward she tokè swith,
That warme was of her lov'is blode and hote,
And to the hertè she her selvin smote,

And thus are Thisbe' and Pyramus ago:
Of trewè men I findin but fewe mo
In al my bokis fave this Pyramus,
And therefore have I spokin of him thus,
For it is deinte to us men to finde
A man that can in love be trewe and kinde.

Here maie ye sene, what lovir so he be,
A woman dare and can as wel as he.

Here endeth the Legende of Thisbe of Babylone.

HERE FOLOWETH
THE LEGENDE OF DIDO

QUEENE OF CARTHAGE.

GLORIE and honour, Virgile Mantuan,
Be to thy name, and I shal as I can
Folowe thy lanterne as thou goest biforne,
How Æneas to Dido was forsworne
In thine Æneide, and Naso wol I take
The tenour and the gret effectis make.
Whan Troie ybrought was to destruction
By Grekis sleight, and namely by Sinon
Faining the horse offrid unto Minerve,
Through which that many a Trojan must sterue,
And Hector had afir his deth apered,
And fire so wode that it might nat ben stered,
In al the noble toure of Ilion,
That of the cite was the chefe dongeon,
And al the countre was so lowe ibrought,
And Priamus the king fordone and nought,
And Æneas was chargid by Venus
To flien awaie, he toke Ascanius,
That was his son, in his right hande and fledde,
And on his backe he bare and with him ledde
His oldè fathir clepid Anchises,
And by the waie his wife Creusa he lese,
And mokil sorow had he in his minde
Er that he could his felawship yfinde,

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But at the last, whan he had 'hem yfoundede, 25
 He made 'hem redy in a certaine stounde,
 And to the se ful fast he gan him hie,
 And sailith forth with al his companie
 Towards Itaile, as wold Destine:
 But of his aventuris in the se 30
 N'is nat to purpose for to speke of here,
 For it accordith nat to my matere;
 But as I said, of him and of Dido
 Shal be my talè til that I have do.

So longe he sailid in the saltè se 35
 Til in Libye unneth arrivid he
 With shippis sevin, and no more navie,
 And glad he was to londè for to hie,
 So was he with the tempest al to shake;
 And whan that he the hayin had itake 40
 He had a knight was callid Achates,
 And him of all his felowship he chese
 To gone with him the cowntre for t'espie,
 He ne toke with him no more companie,
 But forthe thei gon, and left his shippis ride, 45
 His fere and he, withoutin any guide.

So long he walkith in this wildirnesse
 Till at the last he met an huntireffe;
 A bowe in honde and arowis had she,
 Her clothis cuttid were unto the kne, 50
 But she was yet the fairist creature
 That evir was iformid by Nature,

And Æneas and Achates she grette,
And thus she to 'hem spake whan she 'hem met :

Sawe ye, (quod she) as ye han walkid wide,
Any of my sustrin walke you beside,
With any wildè bore or othir best,
That thei have huntid to in this forest,
Ituckid up, with arowes in ther caas?

Naie, sothly, ladie, (quod this Æneas)
But by thy beaute, as it thinkith me,
Thou mightist nevir yerthly woman be,
But Phœbus sustir art thou as I gesse,
And if so be that thou be a goddesse
Have mercie on our labour and our wo.

I n'am no goddesse sothly, quod she tho,
For maidins walkin in this countre here
With arowes and with bow in this manere;
This is the relme of Libye there ye ben,
Of whiche that Dido ladie is and queene;
And shortly tolde all the occasion
Why Dido came into that region,
Of whiche as now me listith nat to rhyme;
It nedith nat; it n'ere but losse of time;
For this is all and some, it was Venus,
His ownè mothir, that spake with him thus;
And to Carthage she bade he should him dight,
And vanishid anon out of his sight.
I could folowin worde for worde Virgile,
But it would lastin all to longè while.

This noble Quene, that clepid was Dido,
 That whilom was the wife of Sichæo,
 That fairir was by ferr than the bright sonne,
 This noble tounne of Carthage hath begonne,
 In whiche she reignith in so grete honour 85
 That she was holdin of all quenis flour
 Of gentilleffe, of fredome, and beaute,
 That well was him that might her onis se,
 Of kingis and of lordis so desired,
 That all the worlde her beaute had ifired, 90
 She fode so well in every wight's grace.

Whan Æneas was come unto the place,
 Unto the maistir temple' of all the toun,
 There Dido was in her devocioun,
 Full privily his waie than hath he nome: 95
 Whan he was into the large temple come
 I can not saine if that it be possible,
 But Venus had him makid invifible,
 Thus saith the boke, withoutin any lese.

And whan this Æneas and Achates 100
 Haddin in this temple ben ovir all,
 Than foundin thei depaintid on a wall
 How Troie and all the lande distroyid was;
 Alas that I was borne! (quod Æneas)
 Thorough the world our shame is kid so wide, 105
 Now it is paintid upon every side:
 All we that werin in prosperite
 Ben now disclaundrid, and in soche degre,

No lengir for to livin I né kepe;
And with that word he braist out for to wepe
So tendirly that routh it was to sene.

This freschè ladie, of the cite Quene,
Stode in the temple in her estate roiall,
So richily and eke so faire withall,
So yong, so lustie, with her eyin glade,
That if that God that hevin and yerth made
Would have a love, for beaute and godenesse,
And womanhede, and trouth and femelineffe,
Whom should he lovin but this ladie swete?
There n'is no woman to him half so mete.

Fortune, that hath the world in govirnaunce,
Hath sodainly brought in so newe a chaunce
That nevir was there yet so frened a caas,
For all the companie of Æneas,
Which that we wenid have lorne in the se,
Arivid is nought ferre fro that cite,
For whiche the gretist of his lordis some
By avinture ben to the cite come,
Unto that samè temple for to seke

The Quene, and of her socour her beseke,
Soche renome was ther sprong of her godenes.

And whan that thei had tolde all ther distress,
And all ther tempest and all ther hard case,
Unto the Quene apperid Æneas,
And opiny beknewe that it was he;
Who haddin joie than but his meine,

That haddin found ther lorde, ther govirnour?

○ The Quene saw that thei did him soche honour,
And had herd oft of Æneas er tho,

And in her hertè she had routhe and wo 140

That evir soche a noble man as he

Shall ben disheritid in soche degre,

And sawe the man that he was like a knight,

And suffisaunt of persone and of might,

And like to ben a very gentilman, 145

And well his wordis he besettin can,

And had a noble visage for the nones,

And formid well of brawne and eke of bones,

And astir Venus had soche fairènesse

That no man might be halfe so faire I gesse, 150

And well a lorde him semid for to be;

And for he was a straungir, somwhat she

Ylikid him the bet, as God doe bote,

To some folk oftin newè thing is sote;

Anon her herte hath pite of his wo, 155

And with that pite love ycame also;

And thus for pite and for gentilnesse

Refreshid must he ben of his distresse.

She sayid certis that she sorie was

That he hath had soche perill and soche caas, 160

And in her frendly speche in this manere

She to him spake, and saied as ye maie here:

Be ye nat Venus sonne and Anchises?

In gode faith all the worship and encrese

That I maie godely doen you ye shall have; 165
 Your shippis and your meinè shall I save:
 And many' a gentill worde she spake him to,
 And commaundid her messangirs to go
 The samè daie withoutin any faile
 His shippis for to seke and 'hem vitaile : 170
 Full many' a best she to the shippis sent,
 And with the wine she gan 'hem to present,
 And to her roiall paleis she her spedde,
 And Æneas alwaie with her she ledde.

What nedith you the festis to discribe? 175
 He nevir bet at ese was in his live;
 Full was the fest of deinties and richesse,
 Of instrumentes, of song, and of gladnesse,
 And many' an amo'rous loking and devise.

This Æneas is come to paradise 180
 Out of the swolowe' of hell, and thus in joie
 Remembrith him of his estate in Troie.
 To daunfing chambris full of paramentes,
 Of richè beddis and of ornamentes,
 This Æneas is ledde aftir the mete; 185
 And with the Quene whan that he had yfete,
 And spicis partid, and the wine agon,
 Unto his chambir was he lad anon
 To take his ese and for to have his rest,
 With all his folke to doen what so 'hem left. 190

There ne was courfir well ibridlid none,
 Ne stedè for the justing well to gone,

Ne largè paulfreÿ esie for the nones,
 Ne jewill yfret full of richè stonès,
 Ne sackis full of gold, of largè wight, 193
 Ne rubie none that shinith bright by night,
 Ne gentill hautin faukon heronere,
 Ne hounde for harte, or wildè bore, or dere,
 Ne cuppe of gold, with floreins newe ibette,
 That in the londe of Libye maie ben gette 200
 That Dido ne' hath Æneas it isent,
 And all is payid what that he hath spent.
 Thus can this worthy Quene her gestis call,
 As she that can in fredôme passin all.

Æneas sothely eke, withoutin lese, 205
 Hath sent to his shippis by Achates
 Astir his sonne, and astir richè thinges,
 Both sceptre, clothis, brochis, and eke ringes,
 Some for to were, and some for to present
 To her that all these noble thinges him sent, 210
 And bad his sonne how that he should ymake
 The presenting, and to the Quene it take.

Repairid is this Achates again,
 And Æneas full blisfull is and fain
 To sein his yonge sonne Ascanius, 215
 For unto him it was reportid thus,
 That Cupido, that is the god of Love,
 At prayir of his mothir hie above,
 Yhad the likenesse of the childe itake,
 This noble Quene enamoured for to make 220

On Æneas; but as to that scripture,
 Be as be maie, I make of it no cure;
 But soth is this, the Quene hath made soch chere
 Unto this childe that wondir was to here,
 And of the present that his fathir sent 225
 She thankid him full oft in gode entent.

Thus is this Quene in plesaunce and in joie
 With all these newè lustie folke of Troie,
 And of the dedis hath she more enquired
 Of Æneas, and all the storie lered 230
 Of Troie, and all the longè daie thei twaie
 Entendidin for to speke and to plaie,
 Of whiche there gan to bredin soche a fire,
 That felie Dido hath now soche desire
 With Æneas her newè gest to dele 235
 That she hath lost her hewe and eke her hele.

Now to the' effect, now to the fruite, of all
 Why I have told this storie' and tellin shall.

Thus I beginne. It fell upon a night,
 Whan that the mone upreifid had her light, 240
 This noble Quene unto her rest ywent,
 She sighid sore, and gon her self tourment,
 She walkith, waloweth, and made many braied,
 As doen these lovirs, as I have herd saied,
 And at the laste unto her sustir Anne 245
 She made her mone, and right thus spake she than:

Now, derè sustir mine! what maie it be
 That me agastith in my dreame? (quod she)

This ilke newe Trojan is so in my thought,
 For that me thinketh he is so well iwrought, 250
 And eke so likely for to ben a man,
 And therewithall so mikill gode he can,
 That all my love and life lieth in his cure;
 Have ye nat herd him tell his avinture?

Now certis, Anne, if that ye redè me, 255
 I woldin fain to him iweddid be:
 This is the effect; what should I more feine?
 In him lieth all to doe me live or deine.

Her sustir Anne, as she that coud her gode, 260
 Said as her thought, and somdele it withstode;
 But hereof was so long a sermoning
 It were to long to makin reherfing;
 But finally, it maie not be withstonde,
 Love woll ylove, for no wight woll it wonde.
 The dawning uprist out of the salte se, 265
 This amorous Quene chargith her meinè
 The nettis dresse, and speris brode and kene,
 An hunting woll this lustie freschè Quene,
 So prickith her this newè jolie wo;
 To horse is all her lustie folke igo, 270
 Unto the court the houndis ben ibrought,
 And upon courfir swift as any thought
 Her yongè knightis hevin all about,
 And of her women eke an hugè rout:
 Upon a thickè palfraie, papirwhite, 275
 With sadill redde, enbroudid with delite,

Of golde the barris, up enbossid high,
 Sate Dido, all in golde and perreywrigh,
 And she is faire as is the brightè morowe
 That helith sick folkis of night's sorowe;
 Upon a courfir startling as the fire,
 Men mightin tourne him with a little wire.

But Æneas, like Phœbus to devise,
 So was he fresh arayid in his wise,
 The fomie bridill, with the bitte of gold,
 Govirnith he right as himself hath would;
 And forthe this noble Quene, this ladie, ride
 On hunting, with this Trojan by her side
 The herde of hartis foundin is anon,
 With Hey go bet, pricke thou, let gon, let gon!
 Why n'il the lion comin or the bere,
 That I might him ones metin with this spere?
 Thus fain this yongè folke, and up thei kill
 The wilde hartis, and have 'hem at ther will.

Emong all this to romblin gan the heven,
 The thondir rorid with a grisly steven,
 Doune come the rain, with haile and slet so fast,
 With hevin's fire, that made so fore agast
 This noble Quene and also her meind,
 That eche of 'hem was glad awaie to fle;
 And, shortly, fro the tempest her to save
 She fled her self into a little cave,
 And with her went this Æneas also,
 I n'ot with 'hem if ther went any mo,

The auctour makith of it no mencion; 305
 And here began the depe affection
 Bitwixt 'hem two; this was the first morowe
 Of her gladnesse and ginning of her sorowe,
 For there hath Æneas iknelid so,
 And tolde her all his hert and all his wo, 310
 And sworne so depè to her to be true
 For well or wo, and chaungin for no newe,
 And as a false lovir so well can plain,
 That felie Dido rewid on his pain,
 Toke him for husbond, and became his wife 315
 For evirmore, while that 'hem last shulde life;
 And aftr this, whan that the tempest stente,
 With mirth out as thei came homeward thei went;
 The wickid fame uprose, and that anon,
 How Æneas hath with the Quene igon 320
 Into the cave, and demid as 'hem list;
 And whan the King (that Yarbass hight) it wist,
 As he that had her loved evir his life,
 And wowid her to havin to his wife,
 Soche sorow' as he hath makid and soche chere 325
 It is a routhe and pite for to here;
 But as in love all daie it happith so
 That one shall laughin at an othir's wo,
 Now laughith Æneas, and is in joie
 And more richesse than evir was in Troie. 330
 O felie woman, full of innocence,
 Full of pite, of truthe, and continence!

What makid you to men to truflin so?
 Have ye foche routh upon ther fainid wo
 And have foche old enfamplis you beforne?
 Se ye nat all how that thei ben forsworne?
 Where se ye one that he ne' hath lafte his lefe,
 Or ben unkinde, or doen her some mifchefe,
 Or pillid her, or hollid of his dede?
 Ye maie as well it fene as ye maie rede.
 Takith hede now of this grete gentilman,
 This Trojan, that so well her plesin can,
 That fainith him so true and obeifing,
 So gentill and so privie' of his doing,
 And can so well doen all his obeifauce,
 And waitith her at feftis and at daunce,
 And whan she goeth to temple' and home again,
 And faftin till he hath his ladie feyn,
 And berin in his devisis for her sake
 N'ot I nat what, and fongis would he make,
 Juslin, and doen of armis many thinges,
 Sende her lettirs, tokins, brochis, and ringes.

Now herkenith how he shal his lady serve:
 There as he was in perill for to fterve
 For hungir and for mifchefe in the fe,
 And defolate, and fledde fro his countre,
 And all his folke with tempeft all to driven,
 She hath her body and eke her relme yeven
 Into his honde, there as she might have ben
 Of othir lande than of Carthage a quene,

And lived in joy inough; what would ye more?

This Æneas, that hath thus depe ifwore,
Is werie of his craft within a throwe,
And the hote earnest is all ovrblowe,
And privily he doeth his shippis dight, 365
And shapith him to stele awaie by night.

This Dido hath suspicion of this,
And thoughtin well that it was all amis,
For in his bedde he lieth anight and siketh;
She askith him anon, What the misliketh, 370
My derè herte! whiche that I lovin moste?

Certis (quod he) this night my fathir's ghoſte
Hath in my slepe me so forely tourmented,
And eke Mercurie' his message hath presented,
That nedis to the conquest of Itaille 375
My destinie is sonè for to faile,
For which me thinkith brostin is mine hert;
Therwith his falsè teris out thei ſtert,
And takith her within his armis two.

Is that in earnest? (quod she) woll ye so? 380
Have ye not sworne to wife me for to take?
Alas! what woman woll ye of me make?
I am a gentill woman and a quene,
Ye woll not fro your wife thus foul yſlene?
That I was borne alas! what shall I do? 385

To telle in ſhort, this noble Quene Dido
She ſekith halowes and doeth sacrifice,
She knelith, crieth, that routh is to devise,

Conjurith him, and prose'rith him to be
 His thrall, his servaunt, in the best degre, 390
 She fallith him to fote, and fownith there,
 Dischevilid with her bright gildid here,
 And saieth, Have mercy! let me with you ride,
 These lordis whiche that wonnin me beside
 Woll me destroyin onely for your sake; 395
 And if ye wolle me now to wife ytake,
 As ye have sworne, than woll I yeve you leve
 To slaen me with your swerde now sone at eve,
 For than yet shall I dyin as your wife;
 I am with childe, and yeve my childe his life: 400
 O mercie, Lorde! have pite in your thought,
 But all this thing availith her right nought,
 For on a night he sleping let her lie,
 And stole awaye into his company,
 And as a traitour forthe he gan to saile 405
 Towardis the large countre of Itaile;
 And thus hath he last Dido' in wo and pine,
 And weddid there a ladie hight Lavine.
 A clothe he last, and eke his sworde standing,
 Whan he fro Dido stole in her sleping, 410
 Right at her bedd'is hedde, so gan he hie
 Whan that he stole awaie to his navie.

Which cloth whan felie Dido gan awake
 She hath it kiste ful oftin for his sake,
 And said, Swete cloth! while Jupiter it left 415
 Take my soule, unbinde me of this unrest,

Gij

I have fulfilled of Fortune all the course:
 And thus, alas! withoutin his focourse
 Twentie timis ifwoundid bath she than.
 And whan that she unto her fustir Anne
 Complainid had of which I maie not write,
 So grete routh I have it for to endite,
 And bad her porice and her fustrin gon
 To fetchin fire and othir thinges anon,
 And sayid that she wouldè sacrifie;
 And whan she might her timè well aspice
 Upon the fire of sacrifice she sterte,
 And with his sworde she rose her to the herte:
 But as mine auctour saith yet this she seide,
 Or she was hurtin, beforne or she deide,
 She wrote at lettrelanon, and thus began:
 Right so (quod she) as the milkwhitè swan
 Ayenst his dethi beginnith for to sing,
 Right so to you I make my complaining,
 Not that I trowe to gettin you again,
 For well I wote that it is al in vain,
 Sens that the goddes ben contrarious to me,
 But sin my name is lost through you (quod she)
 I maie well lese a worde on you or letter,
 All be it I shall be nevir the better,
 For thilkè wind that blewe your ship awaie
 The samè winde hath blowe awaie your faie:
 But who so wol al this lettrel have in minde
 Rede Ovide, and in him he shall it finde.

Thus endeth the Legende of Dido Quene of Carthage.

HERE FOLLOWEETH THE LEGENDE OF

HYPSIPYLE AND MEDEA.

Thou rote of false loviris, Duke Jason,
Thou fleer, devourir, and confusion,
Of gentill women, gentil creatures,
Thou madist thy reclaiming and thy lures
To ladies of thy scathliche aparauce,
And of thy wordis falsid with plesauce,
And of thy fainid trowth and thy manere,
With thine obeisauce and humble chere,
And with thine counterfeitid pain and wo,
There othir falsin one thou falsid two.
O! oftin swore thou that thou wouldist die
For love whan thou ne feltist maladie
Save foule delite, whiche that thou callist love:
If that I live thy name shall be yshove
In Englishe, that thy deceipt shall be knowe:
Have at the, Jason; now thin horn is blow.
But certis it is bothè routh and wo
That Love with falsè lovirs werkith so,
For thei shal have well bettir love and chere
Than he that hath aboughtin love full dere,
Or had in armis many' a bloodie boxe,
For ay as tendre' a capon eteth the fox,
Though he be fals, and hath the foule betraied,
As shall the gode man that therefore hath paid;

Although he have to the' capon skill and right 25
The false foxe woll have his part at night :
On Jason this ensample' is well ifene
By Hypsipyle' and Medea the quene.

In Theffalie, as Ovide tellith us,
There was a knight that hightin Peleus, 30
That had a brothir whiche that hight Æson;
And whan for age he might unnethis gon
He yave to Peleus the govirning
Of all his reigne, and made him lorde and king ;
Of whiche Æson this Jason gettin was, 35
That in his time in all that land there n'as
Nat soche a famous knight of gentillesse,
Of fredome, of strengthe, and of lustinesse.
Astir his fathir's deth he bare him so
That there n'as none that list to ben his foe, 40
But did him all honour and companie,
Of whiche this Peleus hath grete envie,
Imagining that Jason might ybe
Enhaunfid so, and put in soche degre,
With love of lordis of his regioun, 45
That from his reigne he maie be put adoun,
And in his wit anight compassid he
How this Jason might best distroyid be,
Withoutin sclaunder of his compassment ;
And at the last he toke avisement 50
That to sende him into some ferre countre,
Theras this Jason maie distroyid be :

This was his wit, all made he to Jason
 Grete chere of loke and of affection,
 For drede lest that his lordis it espide,
 And so bifell it, as fame ronnyth wide,
 There was soche tiding or all, and soche loos,
 That in an isle that callid was Colchos,
 That stonte beyonde Troie estward in the se,
 There was a Ram which that men mightin se
 That had a Flees of Golde that shone so bright,
 That no where was there soche an othir sight;
 But it was kept alwaie with a drageun,
 And many othir marvailes up and down,
 And with two bullis makid all of bras,
 That spittin fire, and mochil thing ther was;
 But this was eke the tale nathèles,
 That who so would ywinnin thilkè Flees
 He must bothe, or that he it winnin might,
 With the bullis and with the dragon fight.

And King Oëtus lorde was of that ile.

This Peleus bethought upon this while
 That he his nevewe Jason would exhort
 To sailin to that londe him to disport,
 And sayid, Nevewe, if it might ybe
 That soche a worship might befallin the
 That thou this famous trefure mightist win,
 And bringin it my region within,
 It were to me grete plesauce and honour,
 Than were I holdin to quite thy labour.

And all thy costis I woll my self make;
And chesith what folke thou wolt with the take :
Let se now, darste thou takin this voiage?
Jafon was young, and lustie of corage,
And undirtoke to doen this ilke emprise; 85
Anon Argus his shippis gan devise.

With Jafon went the strong stout Hercules,
And many' an othir that he with him ches;
But who so askith who is with him gon
Let him rede the boke Argonauticon, 90
For he woll tel a talè long inough.
Philocretes anon the faile up drough,
Whan that the winde was gode, and gan him hie
Out of his countre callid Theffalie,
So long thei failid in the saltè se 95
Till in the ile of Lemnos arived he,
All be this nat reherfid of Guido,
Yet saieth Ovide in his Epistlis so;
And of this ileland ladie was and quene
The faire and yonge Hypsipyle the shene, 100
That whilom Thoas doughtir was, the king.

Hypsipyle was gon in her playing,
And roming on the clevis by the se;
Undir a banke anone espyid she
Where laie the shippe that Jafon gon arive; 105
Of her godenesse adoune she sendith blive
To wetin if that any straungè wight
With tempest thidir were iblowe anight,

To doen 'hem socour, as was her usaunce
 To furth'rin every wight, and don plesaunce
 Of very bounte and of curtisie.

This messangir adoune him gan to hie,
 And founde Jafon and Hercules also;
 That in a cogge to londe werin igo
 'Hem to refreshin and to take the aire,
 The morowning attempre was and faire,
 And in ther waie this messangir 'hem mette;
 Full conningly these lordis two he grette,
 And did his message, asking 'hem anon
 If thei wer brokin or ought wo bigon,
 Or had nede of lodesmen or of vitaille?
 For of succour they shouldin nothing faile;
 For it was uttirly the Quen's will.

Jafon answerid mekily and still,
 My ladie (quod he) thanke I hertily
 Of her godenesse: us nedith truely
 Nothing as now, but that we werie be,
 And comin for to plaie out of the se
 Till that the winde be bettir in our waie.

This ladie romith by the cliffe to plaie,
 With her meinë, endlong upon the stronde,
 And findith Jafon and this othir stonde
 In speking of this thing, as I you told.

This Hercules and Jafon gan behold
 How that the Quene it was, and faire her grete,
 Anon right as thei with this ladie mete,

And she toke hede, and knewe by ther manere,
By ther araie, by wordis, and by chere,
That it were gentillmen of grete degre,
And to the castle with her ledith she 140
These straungè folke, and doith 'hem gret honor,
And askith 'hem of travaile and of labor
That thei have suffrid in the saltè se;
So that within a daie, or two or thre,
She knewe by the' folke that in his shippis be 145
That it was Jafon, full of renome,
And Hercules, that had the gretè loos,
That foughtin the adventures of Colchos,
And did 'hem honour more than before,
And with 'hem deled evir longir the more, 150
For thei ben worthy folke withoutin lese,
And namely moste she spake with Hercules,
To him her herte she bare, an he should be
Sadde, wise, and true, of wordis avise,
Withoutin any othir affection 155
Of love, or othir imaginacion.

This Hercules hath this Jafon so preised,
That to the sunnè he hath him up reised,
That halfe so true a man there n'as of love
Undir the cope of heven that is above, 160
And he was wise, hardie, secrete, and riche,
Of these iii pointis there n'as non him liche,
Of fredome passid he and lustichedde
All tho that livin and all tho ben dedde,

Thereto so grete a gentillman was he, 165
 And of Theffalie likely king to be;
 There n'as no lacke but that he was agast
 To love, and for to spekin shamèfast;
 Him had levir himself morder and die
 Than that men should a lovir him espie, 170
 As woldè God above that I had give
 My blode and flefhe, so that I might live
 With the bones, that he had aught where a wife
 For his estate, for soche a lustie life
 She shouldin ledin with this lustie knight: 175
 And all this was compassid on the night
 Betwixin Jason and this Hercules:
 Of both these two here was a shrendè lese,
 To come to house upon an innocent,
 For to bedote this Quene was ther entent. 180
 And Jason is as coie as is a maide;
 He lokith pitously, but naught he saied;
 But frely yave he to her counsailers
 Yeftis full grete and to her officers,
 As would God that I lesir had and time 185
 By proceffe all his woicing for to rime;
 But in this house if a false lovir be,
 Right as himself now doeth right so did he
 With faining and with every subtill dede:
 Ye get no more of me but ye woll rede 190
 Th' originall, that tellith all the caas.
 The sothe is this, that Jason weddid was

Unto this Queene, and toke of her substance
 What so him list unto his purveiaunce;
 And upon her begate he childrin two,
 And drough his saile, and sawe her nevir mo.
 A lettir sent she unto him certain,
 Which were to long to writin and to sain,
 And him reprovith of his grete untrouth,
 And prayith him on her to have some routh,
 And on his childrin two: she saied him this,
 That thei be like of allè thing iwis
 To Jafon, save that thei couth nat begile;
 And prayid God or it were longè while
 That she that had his herte irest her fro
 Mote findin him untrue and false also,
 And that she mustè both her childrin spill,
 And allè tho that suffrith him his will.
 And true to Jafon was she all her life,
 And evir kept her chaste as for his wife,
 Ne nevir had she joie at her herte,
 But dyid for his love of sorowes smerte.

To Colchis comin is this Duke Jafon,
 That is of love devourin and dragon,
 As matire appetitith forme alwaje,
 And from forme into forme it passin maie,
 Or as a wellè that were botomles;
 Right so can false Jafon have no pees
 For to desurin through his appetite
 To doen with gentillwoman his delite;

This is his luste and his felicitye,
 Jason is romid forthe to the cite
 That whilom clepid was Jasonicos,
 That was the maistriroune of all Colchos,
 And hath itolde the cause of his coming 225
 Unto Ææta, of that countre king,
 Praying him that he must doen his affaie
 To gette the Flece of Golde if that he maie,
 Of whiche the King assentith to his bone,
 And doth him honour as it is to done, 230
 So ferforth that his doughtir and his heire
 Medea, whiche that was so wise and faire,
 That fairir sawe there nevir man with eye,
 He made her doen to Jason companie
 At mete, and sittin by him in the hall. 235

Now was Jason a semely man withall,
 And like a lorde, and had a greté renoun,
 And of his loke roiall as a lioun,
 And godelie of his speche and familiere,
 And coud of love the craft and art plenere 240
 Withoutin boke, with everiche observaunce;
 And as Fortune her ought a foule mischaunce
 She woxe enamorid upon this man.

Jason, (quod she) for ought I se or can
 As of this thing the whiche ye ben about, 245
 Ye and your self ye put in mochil doubt,
 For who so woll this avinture atcheve
 He maie nat wele astertin as I leye

Withoutin deth, but I his helpe be;
 But nathêles it is my will (quod she) 256
 To forthrin you so that ye shall nat die,
 But turnin sounde home to your Thessalie.

My right fair lady! (quod this Jason tho)
 That ye have of my deth or of my wo
 Any regarde, and doen me this honour, 255
 I wot wel that my might ne my labour
 May nat deservin it my liv'is daie;
 God thankè you there I ne can ne maie:
 Your man am I, and lowely you besече
 To ben my helpe withoutin morè speche; 260
 But certis, for my deth shal I not spare.

Tho gan this Medea to him declare
 The peril of this case fro point to point,
 Of his batayle, and eke in what disjoynt
 He motè stondin, of whiche no cature 265
 Save onely she ne might his lyfe assure:
 And shortly, right to the poynt for to go,
 They ben accordid full betwyxe 'hem two
 That Jason shal her wedde as her true knight,
 And terme yset to comin sone at night 270
 Unto her chambre, and make there his othe
 Upon the goddes, that he for lese or lothe
 Ne shulde her nevir falsin nyght ne daye
 To ben her husbonde whyle he lyvin maye,
 As she that from his deth him savid here; 275
 And hereupon at night they mette yfere,

And doth his othe, and goth with her to bedde;
 And on the morowe upwarde he him spedde;
 For she hath taught him how he shal nat fayle
 The Flees to wyne and stintin his bataile;
 And sauid hym his life and his honour,
 And gate him a name as a conquerour,
 Right through the sleight of her enchantement.
 Now hath Jason the Flese, and home is went
 With Medea, and trefours full grete wonne:
 But unwyste of her fathir she is gonne
 To Theffalye with Duke Jason her lese,
 That astirwarde hath brought her to mischese,
 For as a traytour he is from her go,
 And with her leste yongè childrin two,
 And falsely hath betrayid her, alas!
 And er in love a chese traytour he was,
 And weddid yet the thirdè wyfe anon,
 That was the doughtir of the Kyng Creon.
 This is the mede of lovyng and guerdon
 That Medea receved of Duke Jason
 Right for her trouthe and for her kyndinesse,
 That loved him bettir than her self I gesse,
 And leste her fathir and her herytage:
 And of Jason this is the vassalage,
 That in his dayes n'as nevir non yfounded
 So false a lovyr goyng on the grounde
 And therefore in her lettir thus she sayd,
 First when she of his falsnesse him upbrayd,

With Roma
 H ij

Why lykid' me thy yelowē here to se 305

More than the boundis of myn honeste?

Why lykid' me thy youth and thy fayrnesse,

And of thy tonge the' infynite gracyoulnesse?

O! haddest thou in thy conquest ded ybe

Ful mikil untrouth had there eyed with the.

Wel can Ovide her lettre' in verse endyte,

Whiche were as now to longē for to write. 312

Here endeth the Legende of Hyppspyle and Medea.

HERE FOLOWE I H

THE LEG. OF LUCRECE OF ROME.

Nowe mote I sain th' exilyng of kyngis

Of Rome for ther horrible doyngis,

Of the laste kyng Sextus Tarquinius,

As saith Ovid and Titus Lyvius;

But for that cause tel I nat this storye, 5

But for to prayse and drawe in memorye

The very wyfe, the very true Lucrese,

That for her wifchode and her stedfastnesse

Nat onely that these Panymes her commende,

But that yclepid is in our Legende 10

The gret Austyn, that hath compassioun

Of this Lucrece that starfe in Romē town,

And in what wise I woll but shortly trete,

And of this thing I touch not but the grete.

Whan Ardea besiegid was aboute 15

With Romayns that ful sterne werin and stout,

Ful longè lay the siege, and litil wroughten;
 So that they wer halfe ydil as 'hem thoughten,
 And in his play Tarquinius the yonge
 Gan for to jape, for he was lyght of tonge,
 And sayid that it was an ydle lyfe,
 No man dyd there no more than did his wife,
 And let us speke of wivis, that is best,
 Praise evèrie man his own as him leyst,
 And with our spechis let us ese our herted
 A knight (yclepid Colatin) up sterte,
 And sayid thus, Nay, Sir, it is no nede
 To trowin on the worde but on the dede,
 I have a wife (quod he) that as I trowe
 Is holdin gode of al that er her knowe,
 Go we to Rome to nyght and we shul se
 Tarquinius answerde, That lykith me
 To Rome they be comin, and fast 'hem dighte
 To Colatyn's house, and downe they lighte,
 Tarquinius and eke this Colatine;
 The husbonde knewe the estirs wel and sync,
 And ful prively into the house thei gone:

Nor at the gate ne portir was there none,
 And at the chambre dorè they abyde.
 This noble wife fate by her bedd'is syde
 Discheveled, for no malyce she ne thought,
 And soft wol, saith Livy, that she wrought
 To kepin her from slouth and ydilnesse,
 And bad her servauntes done ther besynesse,

And askith 'hem, What tidinges herin ye? 43
 How saith men of the siege, howe shal it be?
 God wolde the wallis were fallin adowne!
 Myn husband is to long out of this towne,
 For whiche drede doth me sorely to smerte,
 Right as a sworde it styngith to mine hert 50
 When I thinkin on this or of that place;
 God save my lorde, I pray him for his grace!
 And therwithal so tenderly gan wepe,
 And of her werke she toke no more kepe,
 But mekily she let her eyin fal, 55
 And thilkè semblant fate her wel withal,
 And eke her teris, ful of honestè,
 Embelissid her wisely chastitè;
 Her countinunce is to her hertè digne,
 For thei accordidin in dede and signe. 60
 And with that worde her husbonde Colatin,
 Or she of him was ware, came sterling in,
 And sayid, Drede the nat for I am here:
 And she anon up rose with blisful chere,
 And kyssed him, as of wivis is the wonne. 65
 Tarquinius, this proude king's sonne,
 Concevid hath her beautie and her chere,
 Her yelowè here, her bountie', and her manere,
 Her hewe, her wordis, that she hath complained,
 And by no craft her beautie was nat fained, 70
 And caught unto this lady soche desire
 That in his hert he brent as any fire,

So wodely, that his witte was all forgotten,
 For wel thought he she shuldè nat be gotten;
 And aye, the more that he was in dispaire 75
 The more he covetith and thought her faire;
 His blindè luste was al his coveting.
 On morowe, whan the birde began to syng,
 Unto the sieg he cometh ful privily,
 And by himselfe he walkith sobirly, 80
 The' ymage of her recording alway newe,
 Thus lay her here, and thus fresh was her hew,
 Thus sate she, thus she spake, this was her chere,
 Thus faire she was, and this was her manere:
 Al this conceite his herte hath newe ytake, 85
 And as the se with tempest al to shake,
 That aftir whan the storme is al ago
 Yet woll the watir quappe a daie or two,
 Right so, though that her formè were absent
 The plesaunce of her formè was present; 90
 But nathelesse nat plesaunce but delite,
 Or an unrightful talent with dispite,
 For maugre her she shal my lemman be,
Hap belpith bardy man alway, (quod he;)
 What endè that I make it shal be so, 95
 And gyrtte him with his swerde and gan to go:
 And he forth ritt til he to Rome is come,
 And al alone his way that he hath nome
 Unto the house of Colatin ful right;
 Down was the sunne, and day hath lost his lyght; 100

And in he come unto a privie halke;
 And in the night ful thefely gan he stalke,
 Whan every wight was to his rest ybrought,
 Ne no wight had of trefon soche a thought,
 Whethir by windowe or by othir gin:
 With swerde ydrawe shortly he comith in
 There as she lay, this noble wife Lucrece,
 And as she woke her bedde she felte in presse;
 What best is that (quod she) that wayith thus?

I am the king's sonne Tarquinius,
 (Quod he) but and thou crie or noise ymake,
 Or if thou any creature awake,
 By thilkè God that formid man of lyve
 This swerdè through thyne hertè shal I ryve;
 And therewithal unto her throte he sterte,
 And set the swerde al sharpe upon her herte.
 No word she spake; she hath no might therto;
 What shal she saine? her witte is al ago,
 As when a wolfe findith a lambe alone;
 To whom shal she complaine or make her mone?
 What! shal she fightin with an hardie knight?
 Wel wotte men that a woman hath no might;
 What shal she crie, or how shal she asterte,
 That hath her by the throte with swerde at herte?
 She askith grace, and said al that she can.

No, wolt thou nat tho? (quod this cruil man)
 As wisely Jupiter my soule save
 As I shal in thy stable sle thy knave

And lay him in thy bedde, and loudē crie
 That I the fyndin in soche avoutrie; 130
 And thus thou shalt be ded; and also lese
 Thy name, for that thou shalt none othir chese.
 This Romaines wives lovidin so ther name
 At thilke tyme, and dredidin so the shame,
 That what for fere of flaundre' and dred of deth 135
 She lost at quis both her wit and breth,
 And in a swough she lay, and woxe so ded
 Men mightin smitin of her arme or hed,
 She felith nothing neithir foule ne feyre.

Tarquinius, that art a king is heyre, 140
 And shuldist as by linage and by right
 Done as a lorde and as a very knight,
 Why hast thou done dispite to chivalrye?
 Why hast thou done thy lady vilanie?
 Alas! of the this was a vilainous dede. 145
 But nowe to the purpose. In the story I rede
 Whan he was gonne, and this mischaunce is fal,
 This lady sent astir her frendis al,
 Fathir, mothir, and husbonde, al yfere,
 And dischevilid with her herē clere, 150
 In habyt soche as women usid tho
 Unto the buryeng of ther frendis go,
 She sate in hal with a sorowful syght:
 Her frendis askin what her aylin myght,
 And who was ded? and she sate aye wepyng, 155
 A worde for shame ne may she forth out bring,

Ne upon them she durste nat behold;
But at the laste of Tarquin she 'hem tolde
This ruful case, and al this thyng horrible;
The wo to tellin were impossible 160
That she and al her frendis make at ones;
Al haddin folkis hertis ben of stones
It might have makid 'hem upon her rewe,
Her hert ywas so wifely and so trewe.
She said that for her gilte ne for her blame 165
Her husbonde shulde nat have the foulè name;
That woldè she nat sufferin by no waye.
And they answerid al unto her faye
That they foryave it her, for it was right,
It was no gylte, it lay nat in her myght, 170
And saydin her ensamplis many one:
But al for naught, for thus she said anone,
Be as be may (quod she) of forgivyng,
I will nat have no forgifte for nothing:
But privily she coughtin forth a knife, 175
And therewithal she raste her selfe her life,
And as she fel adowne she cast her loke,
And of her clothis yet gode hede she toke,
For in her fallyng yet she had a care
Leste that her fete or soche thingis lay bare, 180
So wel she lovid clennesse and eke trouthe.
Of her had all the towne of Romè rounthe,
And Brutus hath by her chaste blode yswore
That Tarquin shulde ybanished be therfore

And al his kinne, and let the peple cal,
 And opynly the tale he tolde hem al,
 And opynly let cary' her on a bere
 Through al the towne, that men may se and here
 The' horrible dede of her oppressioun;
 Ne nevir was there kyng in Rome toun
 Sens thylke day: and she was holdin there
 A saynt, and evre' her day yhalowed dere
 As in ther lawe. And thus endith Lucrese
 The noble wyfe, Titus berith witnesse.
 I tel it for she was of love so trewe,
 Ne in her wil she chaungid for no newe,
 And in her stable herte sadde and kinde,
 That in these women men may al day finde
 There as they cast ther hert there it dwellich;
 For wel I wote that Christ himselfe tellich
 That in Israel, as wide as is the londe,
 He so grete faith in al the londe ne fonde
 As in a woman, and this is no lie:
 And as for men, loke ye soche tyrannie
 Thei done al daie, assay' hem who so liste,
 The trewist is ful brotil for to trifle.

Here endeth the Legende of Lucrece of Rome.

HERE FOLLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF ARIADNE

OF ATHENS.

MINOS, Infernal Judge, of Crete the Kyng,
Now cometh thy lotte; thou comist on the ryng:
Nat for thy sake alone written is this storye;
But for to clepe ayen unto memorie
Of Theseus the gret untrouthe of love,
For whiche the goddis of hevin above
Ben wroth, and wrath have takin for thy synne:
Be red for shame, nowe I thy lyfe beginne.

Minos, that was the mighty King of Crete,
That had an hundrid cities strong and grete, 10
To schole hath sent his sonne Androgeus
To Athenes, of the whiche it happid thus,
That he was slayne, lerning philosophie
Right in that cyte, nat but for envie.

The grete Minos, of the whiche that I speke, 15
His sonnis deth is comin for to wreke,
Alcathoe' he besiegid harde and longe,
But nathêles the wallis be so stronge,
And Nifus that was kyng of that cite
So chivalrous, that litil dredich he; 20
Of Minos or his hoste toke he no cure
Tyl on a daie befil an avinture
That Nifus doughtir fode upon the wal,
And of the sieg behelde the manir al;

So happid it that at a scarmishing
 She caste her hert upon Minos the king,
 For his beautie and for his chivalrye,
 So sorely that she wenid for to die:
 And shortly of this proceffe for to pace,
 She made Minos to winnin thilkè place,
 So that the cite was al at his wyl
 To savin whom him listè or ellis spill;
 But wickidly he quit her kyndènèsse,
 And let her drenche in sorowe and distresse,
 N'ere that the goddis had of her pite:
 But that tale were longe as nowè for me.
 Athenis was this King Minos also,
 As Alcatheo' and othir townis mo,
 And this th' effect, that Minos hath so driven
 Them of Athenis that thei mote him yeven
 Fro yere to yere ther ownè childrin dere
 For to be slainè, as ye shal aftir here.
 This Minos hath a monstre', a wickid best,
 That was so cruil, that without arest
 Whan that a man was brought into' his presence
 He wolde him ete; there helpith no defence:
 And evèry thirde yere withoutin doute
 Thei castidin lotte as it came aboute
 On riche and pore, he must his sonne take,
 And of his childe he must a presente make
 To Minos, for to save him or to spill,
 Or let his best devour him at his will:

And this hath Minos don right in dispite;
 To wreke his sonne was set al his delyte,
 And makin' hem of Athenis hys thral, 53
 Fro yere to yere while that he livin shal;
 And hom he failith whan this toun is won.
 This wickid custome is so long yron
 Till that the King of Athenes, *Ægeus*,
 Mote sendin his owne sonnè Theseus, 60
 Sens that the lotte is fallin him upon,
 To ben devounrid, for grace is there non:
 And forth is ladde this woful yongè knight
 Unto the countre' of Minos ful of might,
 And in a prision fettrid fast is he 65
 Tyl that ilke time he shulde yfretin be.

Wel maist thou wepe, o woful Theseus!
 That art a king's sonne and damnid thus;
 Me thinkith this, that thou art depe yholde
 To whom that savid the fro caris colde, 70
 And nowe yf any woman helpè the
 Wel oughtist thou her servaunt for to be,
 And ben her trewe lovir yere by yere.
 But nowe to come aien to my matere.

The tourè there this Theseus is throwe 75
 Downe in the bottom derke and wondir lowe,
 Was joyning to the wal of a foreine
 That longin was unto the doughtrin tweine
 Of Minos, whiche that in ther chambris grete
 Dweltin above toward the maistirstrete 80

Of thilkè towne in joy and in solas:
 N'ot I nat howe, it happinid per caas,
 As Theseus complainid him by night,
 The kinge's doughtir that Ariadne hight,
 And eke her sustir Phœdra, herdin al
 His complainte as thei stod in on the wall
 And lokid up upon the brightè mone,
 'Hem listin nat to go to bedde so sone,
 And of his wo thei had compassion;
 A king'is sonne to be in soche prision,
 And ben devourid, thought 'hem grete pite:
 Than Ariadne spake to 'her sustir fre,
 And sayd, Phœdra, my lefe sustir dere,
 This woful lord'is sonne maie ye nat here.
 Howe pitously he complainith his kinne,
 And eke his pore estate that he is inne,
 And giltileffe? certis nowe it is routhe,
 And if ye wol assentin, by my trouthe,
 He shal ben holpin, howe so that we do.

Phœdra answerde, Ywis me is as wo
 For him as er I was for any man,
 And to his helpe the best rede that I can
 Is, that we done the gailir privily
 To come and spekin with us hastily,
 And done this woful man with him to come,
 For if he maie this monstir overcome
 Than were he quite, there is none othir bote:
 Let us wel taste him at his hert'is rote,

That if so be that he a wepon have,
Where that he dare, his life to kepe and save, 110
Fightin with this fende, and himself defende,
For in the prison there he shal discende :
Ye wote wel that the best is in a place
That is not derke, and hath roume and eke space
To welde an axe, or swerde, a staffe, or knife, 115
So that me thinkith he shulde save his life;
If that he be a man he shal do so:
And we shal make him ballis eke also
Of wexe and towe, that whan he gapith fast
Into the best'is throte he shal 'hem caste 120
To fleke his hongir and encombre his tethe,
And right anon whan that Theseus sethe
The best achekid he shal on him lepe
To fleen him or they comin more to hepe ;
This wepon shal the gailir or that tyde 125
Ful privily within the prison hyde :
And for the house is crenclid to and fro,
And hath so queintè wayis for to go,
For it is shapin as the mase is wrought,
Therto have I a remedy' in my thought, 130
That by a clewe of twyne as he hath gon
The samè way he may returne anon,
Folo' wing alway the threde as he hath come :
And whan that he this best hath ovrcome
Than may he flien away out of this stede, 135
And eke the gailir may he with him lede,

And him avaunce at home in his countre,
Sens that so gret a lord's sonne is he.

This is my rede, if that ye dare it take.
What shulde I lengir sermon of it make?
The gailir cometh, and with him Theseus;
And whan these thingis ben accordid thus,

Adowne sate Theseus upon his kne;
O the right lady of my life! (quod he)
I sorowfull man, ydamnid to the dethe,
Fro you whilis that me ylastith brethe
I wol nat twinne afir this avinture,
But in your service thus I wol endure,
That as a wretche unknow I wol you serve
For evirmore tyl that min hertè sterve;
Forsake I wol at home min heritage,
And as I said hen of your courte a page,
If that ye vouchsafin that in this place
Ye grauntin me to havin soche a grace
That I may have nat but my mete and drinke;
And for my sustinaunce yet wol I swinke
Right as you list, that Minos ne no wight
Sens that he saw me nevir with eyenfight,
Ne no man ellis, shal me nat espye,
So sily and so wel I shal me gye,
And me so wel disfigure and so lowe,
That in this world there shal no man me knowe,
To have my lyfe and to have the presence
Of you that done to me this excellence.

And to my fathir shal I fendin here 165
This worthy man, which that is your gaylere,
And him so guerdon that he shal wel be
One of the gretist men of my countre:
And if I durste sayne, my lady bright!
I am a king's sonne and eke a knight, 170
As woldè God if that it might ybe
Ye werin in my countre allè thre,
And I with you to bere you companye,
Than shuld you sene if that I therof lye,
And if I profir you in lowe manere 175
To ben your page, and servin you right here,
But I you serve as lowly in that place
I pray to Mars to yeve me sochè grace
That sham'is deth on me there motè fall,
And deth and povertè to my frendis all, 180
And that my spritè by night motè go
Aftir my deth and walkin to and fro,
That I mote of foule traitour have a name,
For whiche my sprit mote go, to do me shame,
And if I clayme evir othir degre, 185
But ye vouchsafin to grauntin it me,
As I have said, of sham'is deth I deye,
And mercy, lady! I can naught els fey.

A semely knight was this Theseus to se,
And yongè, but of twenty yere and thre, 190
But who so had ysene his countinaunce
He would have wept for routh of his penaunce,

For which this Ariadne in this manere
 Answerde to his profre and to his chere:

A kyng'is sonne and eke a knight (quod she) 195
 To ben my servaunt in so low degre
 God shild it! for the shame of women al,
 And lene me nevir soche a case befall,
 And sende you grace and sleight of hert also
 You to defende and knightly sleen your foe, 200
 And lene here aftir that I may you finde
 To me and to my sustir here so kynde
 That I ne repent nat to yeve you lyfe;
 Yet were it bettir that I were your wife,
 Sithe that ye ben as gentil borne as I, 205
 And have a relme nat ferre but faste by,
 Than I suffrid your gentillesse to slerve,
 Or that I let you as a page to serve;
 It is no profite unto your kinrede,
 But what is that that men n'ill do for dred? 210
 And to my sustir, syth that it is so
 That she mote gone with me if that I go,
 Or ellis suffre deth as wel as I,
 That ye unto your sonne as trewily
 Done her be weddid at your home comming; 215
 This is the synal ende of al this thing,
 Ye fwere it here on all that may be sworne.

Ye, lady myn, (quod he) or els to torne
 Mote I be with the Minotaure to morowe,
 And havith here of min hertblod to borowe, 220

If that ye wol, if I had knife or spere
 I wolde it lettin out and thereon swere,
 For than at criste I wot ye would me leue,
 By Mars, that is the chiefe of my beleue,
 So that I mightin lyvin and nat faile 225
 To morowe for to takin my bataile
 I ne wolde nevir fro this placè flye
 Tyl that ye shulde the very profc yse;
 For now, if that the soth I shall you say,
 I have lovid you ful many a daie, 230
 Though ye ne wist it nat, in my countre,
 And aldirmoste desyrid you to se
 Of any erthly living créature;
 Upon my trouthe I swere and you assure,
 This fevin yere I have your servaunt be; 235
 Nowe have I you, and also have ye me,
 My derè hert! of Athenis Duchesse.
 This lady smilith at his stedfastnesse,
 And at his hertely wordes, and at his chere,
 And to her sustir sayd in this manere: 240
 And sothely, leve all sustir myn, (quod she)
 Nowe be we duchessis both I and ye,
 And sikerde to the regals of Athenes,
 And bothe hereastir likely to be quenes,
 And favid fro his deth a king's sonne, 245
 As er of gentilwomen is the wonne
 To save a gentilman enforth ther might,
 In honest cause, and namely in his right,

Me thinkith no wight ought us hereof blame,
Ne berin us therfore an evil name.
And shortly of this matir for to make,
This Theseus of her hath leue ytake,
And every point was performid in dede
As ye have in this covenaut herde me rede;
His wepen, his clewe, his thing, that I have said,
Was by the gailir in the house ylaid,
There as the Mynotaure hath his dwellyng,
Right faste by the dore at his entring,
And Theseus is lad unto his dethe;
And forth unto this Minotaure he gethe,
And by the teching of this Adriane
He ovircame this best and was his bane;
And out he comith by the clewe againe
Ful privily whan he this best hath slaine,
And by the gailir gottin hath a barge,
And of his wiv'is trefure gan it charge,
And toke his wife and eke her sustir fre,
And eke the gailir, and with 'hem al thre
Is stole away out of the londe by night,
And to the countre' of Enupie him dight,
Thereas he had a frende of his knowing;
There festin thei, there daunfin thei and sing,
And in his armis hath this Adriane,
That of the best hath kept him fro his bane,
And get him there a noble barge anone,
And of his countre folke a ful gret wone,

And taketh his leve, and homwarde sailith he;
 And in an yle amiddis the wilde se,
 Thereas there dwellid nevir creture none
 Save wild bestis, and that ful many one, 280
 He made his shippe alondè for to sette,
 And in that yle halfe a daie he lette,
 And sayd, that on the londe he must him reste;
 His mariners have done right as him leste:
 And for to tellin shortly in this case, 285
 Whan Ariadne his wife aslepe was,
 For that her sustir fayrir was than she,
 He taketh her in his bonde, and forth goth he
 To shyppe, and as a traitour stale away
 While that this Ariadne allepe lay, 290
 And to his countre warde he sailith blive,
 A twenty dyvil way the winde him drive,
 And found his fathir drenchid in the se.
 Me lyste no more to speke of him parde;
 These falsè lovirs poison be ther bane! 295

But I wol turne againe to Adriane,
 That is with slepe for werinesse ytake,
 Ful sorowfully her hert may awake.

Alas! for the myne herte hath grete pite.
 Right in the dawining awakith she, 300
 And gropith in the bed, and fond right nought.

Alas, (quod she) that evir I was wrought!
 I am betrayid, and her here to rente,
 And to the stronde all barefote fast she wente,

And cryid, Theseus, myn hertè swete!
 Where be ye, that I may nat with you mete,
 And might thus with the bestis ben ysaine?

The halowe rockis answerde her againe;
 No man she sawe, and yet yshone the mone;
 And hye upon a rocke she wentin sone,
 And sawè his barge ysailing in the se;
 Colde woxe her hert, and right thus sayid she:

Mekir than ye finde I the bestis wyld:
 Hath he nat synne that he her thus begylde?
 She cried, O turne againe for routhe and sinne!
 Thy barge ne hath nat al his meinè inne.

Her couverchefe on a pole styckid she
 Ascauncè that he shulde it wele yse,
 And him remembre that she was behinde,
 And turne againe, and on the stronde her finde.

But all for naught; his way he is ygone;
 And downe she fel a swowne upon a stonè,
 And up she risse, and kyssed in all her care
 The steppis of his fete there he hath fare,
 And to her bed right thus she spekith tho:

Thou bed, (quod she) that hast recevid two,
 Thou shalt answere of two and not of one;
 Where is the gretir partè? away gone?
 Alas! wher shal I wretchid wight become?
 For though so be that botè none here come
 Home to my countre dare I nat for drede;
 I can my selfin in this case nat rede.

What should I tellin more here complaining?
 It is so long it were an hevy thing;
 In her epistle Naso tellith all.
 But shortly to the ende tellin I shall,
 The goddis have her holpin for pyte,
 And in the fygne of Taurus men may se
 The stonis of her corowne shynè clere.
 I will no more spekin of this matere,
 But thus this false lovir can begile
 His trew love; the devil quit him his while!

Here endeth the Legende of Ariadne.

HERE FOLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF PHILOMELA.

Thou yevir of the formis that hast wrought
 The fayrè world, and bare it in thy thought
 Eternally er thou thy werke began,
 Why madist thou to the slaundir of man?
 Or allbe that it was not thy doying,
 As for that ende to makin soche a thing,
 Why suffredest thou that Iereus was bore,
 That is in love so false and so forswore,
 That fro this world up to the first hevin
 Corruptith whan that folke his name nevin?
 And as to me, so grisly was his dede,
 That whan that I this foulè storie rede

Myne eyin wexin foule and fore also,
 Yet lasteth the venyme of so long ago
 That it enfectith him that wolde beholde
 The storie of Tereus of which I tolde
 Of Thrace was he the lorde, and kyn to Marie,
 The cruil god that stante with bloody darte,
 And weddid had he with full blisfull chere
 King Pandion's faire doughtir dere
 That hight Progne, the floure of her countre,
 Though Juno liste not at the fest to be
 Ne Hymen, that the god of Weddyng is,
 But at the feste redy he is
 The Furis three, with all ther mortall bronde,
 The oule all night above the balkis wonde,
 That prophete is of wo and of mischaunce
 This revill, full of song and full of daunce,
 Lastid a fourtènight or little lasse:
 But shortlie of this storie for to passe,
 (For I am werie of hym for to tell)
 Five yere his wife and he togithir dwell,
 Till on a dale she gan so fore to long
 To sene her sustir, that she sawe not long,
 That for desire she ne wist what to saie,
 But to her hushonde gan she for to praie,
 For Godd's love, that she mote onis gone
 To sene her sustre, and come ayen anon,
 Or ellis but she motè to her wende
 She praied him that he would astir her sende;

And this was daie by daie all her praier,
With all humbleſſe of wiſehode, wordes, and chere.

This Tereus let make his ſhippis yare,
And into Grece hymſelf is forthe ifare:
Unto his fathir in-lawe gan he praie
To vouchefaſin that for a moneth or twaie
That Philomela his wife's fuſtir might
On Progne' his wife but onis have a ſight,
And ſhe ſhall come to you again anon,
My ſelf with her I will bothe come and gon,
And as my hert'is life I will her kepe.

This olde Pandion, this kyng, gan to wepe
For tendirneſſe of hertè ſor to leve.
His doughtir gon, and ſor to yeve her leve;
Of all this worlde he lovid nothyng ſo;
But at the laſtè leve hath ſhe to go,
For Philomela with ſalt teris eke
Gan of her fathir his grace to beſeke
To ſene her fuſtir, that her longith ſo,
And hym enbracith with her armis two:
And therewithal ſo yonge and faire was ſhe,
That when that Tereus ſawe her beaute,
And of arraie that there was none her liche,
And yet of beaute was ſhe to ſo riche,
He caſt his ſierie herte upon her ſo
That he woll have her how ſo that it go,
And with his wilis knelid and ſo praied
Till at the laſt Pandion thus yſaied:

Now sonne, (quod he) that art to me so dere,
 I the betake my yonge doughtir here,
 That begeth the keie of all myne hert is life,
 And grete me well my doughtir and thy wife,
 And yeve her leue somtyme for to pleie,
 That she maie se me onis or I deie.
 And sothly he hath made hym riche fast,
 And to his folke the moste and eke the last,
 That with him came, and yave him yestis grete,
 And him conveyith through the maffinestrete
 Of Athenis, and to the se hym brought,
 And tournith home, no malice he ne thought.
 The oris pullith forth the vessil fast,
 And into Thrace arrieth at the last,
 And up into a forest he her led,
 And to a cave full privily hym sped,
 And in this darke cave, if that her lest
 Or ne list nought, he had her for to rest,
 Of whiche her herte agrose, and sayd thus:

Where is my suster, brothir Tereus?
 And there withall she wept full tendirly,
 And quoke for fere all pale and pitouslie,
 Right as the lambe that of the wolfe is bitten,
 Or as the culver that of the egle is smitten,
 And is out of his clawis forthe escaped,
 Yet it is still aserde and fore awhaped,
 Lest it be hent of sonis; so fate shere
 But uttirly it maie none othir be,

By force hath this traitour ydoen a dede noll wol
 That he hath rest her of her maidinhede
 Maugre her hed, by strength and by his might.

Lo, here a dede of men, and that aright
 She cryith Sussir with full loudè steven
 And Fathir dere! o helpe me: God in heven!
 All helpith not: and yet this false thefe
 Hath doen his ladie yet a more mischefe,
 For fere lest that she should his shame crie,
 And doen him opinlie a vilanie,
 And with his swerd her tong of kerfith he,
 And in a castill made her for to be
 Full privily in prisone evirmore,
 And kept her to his usage and his store,

So that she ne might nevir more asterte.
 O sely Philomela! wo' is thine herte,
 Huge ben thy sorowis, and wondir finerte;
 God wreke the, and sende the thy bone!
 Now it is time I make an ende sone.

This Tereus is to his wife icome,
 And in his armis hath his wife inome,
 And pitously he wept, and shoke his hedde;
 And swore her that he found her sussir dedde,
 For whiche this felie Progne hath soche wo;
 That nigh her sorowfull herte brake atwo:
 And thus in teris let I Progne dwell,
 And of her sussir forthe I woll you tel.

This wofull ladie lernid had in youth
 So that she workin and enbraudin couth,
 And wevin in her stole the radèvore,
 As it of women hath ben wovid yore;
 And, sothly for to saine, she hath her fill
 Of mete and drinke, of clothing at her will,
 And couthreke rede well inough and endite,
 But with a pennè she ne could not write,
 But lettirs can she wevin to and fro,
 So that by that the yere was all ago
 She had ywovin in a stamen large
 How she was brought fro Athens in a barge,
 And in a cave how that she was ybrought,
 And all the thyng that Tereus ywrought,
 She wawe it wel, and wrote the storie above
 How she was servid for her sustir's love;
 And to a knave a ring she yave anon,
 And prayid him by signis for to gon
 Unto the Quene, and berin her that clothe,
 And by signis swore him many an othe
 She should him yevin what she gettin might.

This knave anon unto the Quene him dight,
 And toke it her, and all the manir tolde:
 And when that Progne hath this thing behold
 No worde she spake for sorowe and for rage,
 But fainid her to gon on pilgrimage
 To Bacchus temple; and in a little stonde
 Her dombe sustir yfityng hath she founde,

Weping in the castill her self alone;
 Alas the woe, the constraint, and the mone,
 That Progne upon her dombe sullir maketh;
 In armes everiche of 'hem othir taketh;
 And thus I let 'hem in ther sorowe dwell;
 The remenaunt is no charge for to tell,
 For this is all and some, thus was she served
 That nevir ought agiltid ne deserved
 Unto this cruill man that she of wiste.
 Ye maie beware of men if that you liste,
 For all be that he woll not for his shame
 Doin as Tereus to lese his name,
 Ne serve you as a murtherer or a knave,
 Full little while shullin ye trewe him have,
 That woll I sain, al wer he now my brother;
 But it so be that he maie have none other.

Here endeth the Legende of Philomela.

HERE FOLLOWETH

THE LEGENDE OF PHYLLIS.

By prove as well as by aucthorite
 That wickid fruite commeth of a wickid tre
 That maie ye find if that it likith you;
 But for this ende I speke this as now,
 To tellin you of false Demophoon;
 In love a falsir heed I nevir non

But it wérin his fathir Theseus;
 God for his grace fro soche one kepinaus
 Thus these women yprayin that it here
 Now to the' effeete tourne I of my materel
 Destroyid is of Troie the cite;
 This Demophon came sailyng in the se
 Toward Athenis, to his paleis large;
 With him came many' a ship and many' a barge
 All full of folke, of whiche full many one
 Is woundid fore, and fike, and wo begone,
 And thei have at the siegè long ilaine;
 Behinde him came a winde and eke a raine
 That shofe so fore his saile ne might not stonde,
 Hym were levir then all the worlde a londe;
 So huntith hym the tempest to and fro,
 So darke it was he could no where ygo,
 And with a wave to brustin was his sterc;
 His ship was rent so lowe in soche manere
 That carpenter ne could it not amende;
 The se by night as any torche brende
 For wode, and possith him up and down,
 Till Neptune hath of hym compassioun,
 And Thetis, Chorus, Triton, and thei all,
 And madin him upon a londe to fall
 Whereof that Phyllis lady was and quene;
 Lycurgus doughtir, fairir unto sené
 Then is the floure again the brightè sonne:
 Unneth is Demophon to londe iwonne,

Weke and eke werie, and his folke forpined 33
 Of werineſſe, and alſo enſamined,
 And to the deth he was almoſte idriven
 His wiſe folke counſaile have him yeven
 To ſekin helpe and ſuccour of the Queene,
 And lokin what his grace might benede,
 And makin in that lande ſome cheſſaunce,
 And keptin him fro wo and fro miſchaunce,
 For ſike he was and almoſte at the deth,
 Unnethis might he ſpeke or drawin breth,
 And lieth in Rhodopeia hym to reſte. 45
 When he may walkin him thought it was beſte
 Unto the courte to ſekin for ſuccour;
 Men knewe him wele, and diddin hym honour,
 For at Athenis duke and lorde was he,
 As Theſeus his fathir hath ibe,
 That in hiſtymè was of grete renoun,
 No man ſo grete in all his regioun,
 And like his fathre' of face and of ſtature,
 And falſe of love, it came hym of nature,
 As doeth the foxe Renarde, the fox'is ſonne, 55
 Of kinde he could his oldè fathir wonne
 Withoutin lore, as can a drake ſwimme
 When it is caught and caried to the brimme.
 This honorable Phyllis doth him chere;
 Her likith well his porte and his manere; 60
 But I am all agrotid here before
 To write of 'hem that in love ben forſworne,

And eke to hastin me in my Legendes of the world
 Which to performe God me grace yscheyde
 Therefore I passin shortly in this wise
 Ye have well herd of Theseus the gife
 In the betraying of faire Adriane,
 That of her pite kept him fro his haberdasherie
 At short wordis, right so Demophoon
 The same waie and the same pathe hath gon
 That did his false fathir Theseus
 For unto Phyllis hath he sworn thus
 To weddin her, and her his trouthe plight
 And pikid of her all the gode he might
 Whan he was whole and sounde and had his rest,
 And doeth with Phyllis what he list
 As well I could, if that me liste so
 Tellin of all his doying to and fro
 He saied that to his countre more hym saile
 For there he would her wedding apparail
 As fill to her honour and his also
 And opinly he toke his leue tho
 And to her swore that he would not sojourn
 But in a moneth again he would retourn
 And in that londe let make his ordinaunce
 As very lorde, and toke the obsequence
 Well and humbly, and his shippis ydight
 And home he goith the next waie he might
 But unto Phyllis again came he noughty
 And that hath she, so harde and fore ibought

Alas! as the storie doth us recorde,
 That she was her owne deth right with a corde,
 When that she saw that Demophon her traied;
 But first wrote she to him, and fast him praied;
 He would come and delivir her of pain,
 As I reherfin shall a worde or twain;
 Me liste not to vouchsafe on him to swinke;
 Dispendin on him a pennefull of ynke,
 For false in love was he, right as his fire,
 The devill set ther' soules both on fire!
 But of the lettre' of Phyllis woll I write
 A worde or twain, although it be but lite.
 Thine holtesse, (quod she) o Demophoon!
 Thy Phyllis, whiche that is so wo begon,
 Of Rhodopeie upon you mote complain,
 Ovir the terme yset betwixt us twain,
 That ye ne holdin forward as ye saied;
 Your ancre whiche ye in our havin laied
 Hight us that ye would comin out of doubt
 Or that the monè onis went about,
 But timis fower the monè hath hid her face
 Sens thilkè daie ye wentin fro this place
 And fowir timis light the worlde again;
 But for all that yet shall I sothly sain
 Yet hath the streame of Scython not ythrough
 From Athenis the ship, yet came it nought;
 And if that ye the termè rekin would
 As I or othir true lovirs doe should,

I plainin not (God wot) before my daid,
 But all her lettir writin I ne maie
 By ordir, for it were to me a charge;
 Her lettir was right long, and thereto large,
 But here and there in rhyme I have it laied
 There as me thought that she hath wel ysaid.

She faied, The faillis comith not again,
 Ne to the worde there n'is no fey certain:
 But I wot why ye comin not, (quod she)
 For I was of my love to you so fte;
 And of the goddis that ye have yswore
 If that ther vengeance fall on you therefore
 Ye be not suffisaunt to bere the pain;
 To mochil trustid I, well maie I sain,
 Upon your linage and your faire tong,
 And on your teris falsly out ywrong:
 How coude ye wepin so by craft? (quod she)
 Maie there soche teris evir fainid be?

Now certis if ye would have in memorie
 It oughtin be to you but little glorie
 To have a felie maidin thus betraied
 To God (quod she) praie I, and oft have praied,
 That it be now the gretist price of all
 And moste honour that er you shall befall;
 And when thine old auncetirs paintid be,
 In whiche men maie ther worthinesse yse,
 Then praie I God thou paintid be also,
 That folke maie redin fortheby as thei go,

Lo! this is he that with his flattery
 Betrayid hath and doen her villany
 That was his true love in thought and dede!
 But sothly of o point yet maie thei rede; 130
 That ye ben like your fathir as in this,
 For he begild Ariadne iwis
 With soche an arte and soche a subtilke
 As thou thy selvin hast begild me;
 As in that point, although it be not feire; 135
 Thou folowist certain, and art his heire:
 But fens thus finfully ye me begile
 My bodie more ye fene within a while
 Right in the haven of Athenis fletyng
 Withoutin sepulture and buryng; 140
 Though ye ben hardir then is any stone
 And when this lettir was forth sent anone,
 And knewd how brotill and how fals he was;
 She for dispaire fordid her self, alas!
 Soche sorowe hath she for she beset her so; 145
 Beware ye women of your subtille fo,
 Sens yet this daie men maie ensample se,
 And trustith now in love no man (but me) 148

Here endeth the Legende of Phyllis.

THE LEG. OF HYPERMNESTRA.

IN Greece whilom were dwelling brethren two,
Of whiche that one was callid Danao,
That many' a sonne hath of his bodie wonne,
As soche false lovis oft mis connec.

Emongis his sonnys all there was one,
That aldirmoste he loved of everychone,
And when this child was borne this Danao
Shope him a name, and callid hym Lino;
That othir brothir callid was Egiste,
That was of love as false as er him liste;
And many' a daughter gate he in his life,
Of whiche he gate upon his righte wife
A daughter dere, and did her for to call
Hypermnestra, the yongist of them all,
The whichè childe of her nativite
To alle gode thewis yborne was she,
As likid to the goddes or she was borne
That of the shefe she should be the corne:
The werdis that we clepin Destine
Hath shapin her that she must nedis be
Pitons, and sad, and wise, and true as steele;
And to this woman it accordith wele,
For though that Venus yave her gretè beute
With Jupiter compownid so was she

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That conscience and trouthe, and drede of shame, 25
 And of her wifehode for to kepe her name,
 This thought her was felicity as here:
 And Red Mars was at that tyme of the yere
 So feble that his malice is him rafte,
 Repressed hath Venus his cruill crafte, 30
 And what with Venus and othir oppression
 Of housis Mars his venime is adon,
 That Hypermnestra dare not handle' a knife's rest
 In malice though she should in lese her life;
 But nathelless as hevin gan the turne, 35
 Two bad aspectis hath she of Saturne,
 That made her for to dyne in prison;
 And I shall alir makin inencion
 Of Danao and Egistis also,
 And though so be that thei were brethrin two, 40
 For thilke tyme n'as sparid no linage,
 It likid 'hem to makin mariage
 Betwixt Hypermnestra and him Lino,
 And castin sothe a date it shall be so,
 And full accordid was it uttirly, 45
 The' araie is wrought, the tyme is faste by;
 And thus Lino hath of his fathir's brother
 The doughtir wedded, and ech of 'hem hath other.
 The torchis brennin and the lampis bright,
 The sacrificis ben full redy dight, 50
 Th' ensence out of the fire outrekith sote,
 The floure the lese, is rent up by the rote.

To make in garlandis and crouche hie;
 Full is the place of sound of minstralcie,
 Of songis amorous of mariage;
 As thilkè tyme was the plain usage;
 And this was in the paleis of Egiste;
 That in his hous was lord right as him list;
 And thus that daie thei drivin to an ende
 The frendis takin leve, and home thei wende;
 The night is come, the bride shall go to bed,
 Egist is to his chamber fast him sped,
 And privily he let his doughtir call
 When that the hous voidid was of hem all;
 He lokith on his doughtir with glade chere,
 And to her spake as ye shall here;
 My right doughtir, the trefour of mine herte;
 Sens first that daie that shapin was my herte;
 Or by the Fatall Sustir had my dome;
 So nye myne herte nevin thing ne come;
 As thou my Hypermnestra, doughtir doted;
 Take hede what thy fathir sayith the hore;
 And werke as thy wifir evirmoy;
 For aldirfirst doughtir I love the;
 That all the worldè to me n'is halfe so lefe;
 Ne I n'olde redè the to thy mischese;
 For all the gode undir the coldè mone;
 And what I mene it shal be said right sone;
 With proffession, as faine these wise;
 That but thou doe as I shall the devise;

Thou shalt be ded; by him that al hath wrought
 At shortè wordis, thou ne scapist thought
 Out of my paleis or that thou be dede
 But thou consent and werke afir my roder;
 Take this to the for full conclusioun.
 This Hypermnestra cast her eyin doun
 And quoke as doeth the lefe of a spiss grent;
 Ded wez her hew, and like ashin to fene;
 And sayid; Lorde and fathir, all your will,
 Afir my might, God wote I shall fulfill;
 So it be to me no confusioun.

I n'ill (quod he) have non excepcioun,
 And out he caught a knife as rasour keene;
 Hide this (quod he) that it be nat isene;
 And when thine housbonde is to bed ygo,
 While that he slepith cut his throte atwo,
 For in my dreame it is ywarnid me
 How that my newewe shall my bane ybe,
 But whiche I n'ot; wherefore I woll be liker;
 If thou saie naie we two shall have a biker;
 As I have saied, by him that I have sworne;
 This Hypermnestra hath nigh her wit forlorb;
 And for to passe harmelesse out of that place
 She grauntid him, there was non othir grace;
 And therewithall a costrell takith he,
 And saied, Hereof a draught or two, or thre,
 Yeve him to drinke when he goith to reste,
 And he shall slepe as long as er the leste,

The narcotikes and apies ben so strong,
 And go thy waie, lest that him thinke to long.
 Out cometh the bride, and with full sobre chere,
 As is of maidins oft in the manere,
 To chambir brought with reuil and with song:
 And shortlie, lest this tale be to long,
 This Lino and she beth bin brought to bed,
 And every wight out at the dore him sped.
 The night is wastid, and he fell asleepe;
 Full tenderly beginnith she to wepe;
 She rist her up, and dredefully she quaketh,
 As doeth the braunch that Zephyrus yshaketh;
 And husht were all in Aragon that cite:
 As colde as any froste now wexith she,
 For pite by the herte strainid her so,
 And drede of deth doith her so moche wo,
 That thryis doune she fill; in soche a were
 She rist her up, and stakereth here and there,
 And on her handis faste lokith she;
 Alas! quod she, shall myne handes blodie be
 I am a maidin, and by my nature,
 And by my semblaunt, and by my vesture,
 Myne handis ben not shapin for a knife,
 As for to reuin no man fro his life:
 What devill have I with the knife to do?
 And shall I have my throte ycorve atwo?
 Then shall I blede, alas! and be yshende:
 And nedis of this thing moté have an ende;

Or he or I mote nedis lese our life;
 Now certis (quod she) sens I am his wife,
 And hath my faith, yet is it bette for me
 For to be dedde in wifely honeste 140
 Then be a traitour living in my shame;
 Be as be maie, for earnest or for game,
 He shall awake, and rise and go his waie
 Out at this guttir er that it be daie;
 And wept full tendirly upon his face, 145
 And in her armis gan him to embrace,
 And him she roggith and awakith soft;
 And at the windowe lepe he fro the loft
 When she hath warnid him and doen him bote.
 This Lino swift ywas and light of fote, 150
 And from his wife he ran a full gode pace;
 This felie woman is is so weke, alas!
 And helpelesse, so that er she ferre went
 Her cruill fathir did her for to hent.
 Alas, Lino! why art thou so unkinde? 155
 Why no hast thou remembred in thy minde
 And takin her and led her forthe with the?
 For when she sawe that gone awaie was he,
 And that she ne might not so fast ygo,
 Ne folowin him, she fate doune right tho
 Til she was caught and fettrid in prison;
 This Tale is saied for this conclusion. 162

Thus endeth the Legende of Gode Women.
 Amen

A PRAISE OF WOMEN.

Al the that lyfte of women ill to speke,
 And sayin of 'hem worse than they deserue,
 I pray to God that ther neckis to breke,
 Or on some yll dethe mote tho jangler sterve,
 For every man were holdin 'hem to serue,
 And do 'hem worship, honour, and seruyse,
 In every manir they best coude devise.

For we ought first to think on what manere
 Thei bring us forth, and what pain thei endure
 First in our byrth, and sith fro yere to yere
 How busily they done ther busy cure
 To kepe us fro every mysaventure
 In our youthhed, when that we have no might
 Our selfe to kepe neythr by day nor night.

Alas! howe may we say on 'hem but wele
 Of whom we were yostred and ybore,
 And ben all our socoure, and trewe as stele,
 And for our sake ful ofte they suffre sore?
 Without women were al our joye ylore,
 Wherefore we ought al women to obey
 In al godenesse; I can no more ysay.

This is wel knowin, and hath ben or this,
 That women ben the cause of al lightheffe,
 Knighthode, norture, eschewing al malis,
 Encrese of worship and of worthinesse,
 Therto curteys, meke, grounde of alle godenesse,
 Glad and mery, and trewe in every wise
 That any gentle' hert can thinke or devise.

And though any would trust to your untruth,
 And to your faire wordis would aught assent,
 In gode faith me thinkith it wer grete ruth
 That othre' women should for thier gilt be shent
 That ner knewe no wylt nought of thier entent,
 Ne list not to here the faire wordes ye write,
 Whiche ye you paine fro daie to daie t' endite. 35

But who maie beware of your talts untrue
 That ye so busilie painte and endite?
 For ye will swerin that ye never knewe
 Ne sawe the woman neithir moche ne lite,
 Save only her to whom ye had delite,
 As for to serve of all that er ye sey,
 And for her love must ye nedis dey. 42

Then wil ye swere that ye knew ner before
 What Love was, ne his dredfull observaunce,
 But now ye sein that he can wounde sore,
 Wherefore ye put you' into her govirnaunce
 Whom Love hath ordeined you to serve and do ple-
 With al your might your lityl liv'is space, [saunce
 Whiche endith sone but if she doe you grace; 49

And then to bedde will ye you sone ydrawe,
 And sone your selvis sick ye will then saie
 And swerin fast your ladie hath you slawe,
 And brought you sodainly in so high pain
 That fro your deith maie no man you restrain,
 With a dangerous loke of her eyin two,
 That to your dethe must ye nedis go. 56

Thus will ye morne, thus will ye sigh for,
 As though your hert anon in two wold breft,
 And swere fast that ye maie live no more,
 Myne owne ladie, that might if ye list
 Bryng in myne herte sondele into rest,
 As if you list mercie on me to have,
 Thus your untrouth will evir mercie crave.

Thus woll ye plain in tho you nothing sinerte
 These innocent creatures for to begile,
 And swere to 'hem so woundid is your herte,
 For love of them that ye maie live no while,
 Scarllie so long as one might go a mile,
 So hyth Deth to bryng you to an ende,
 But if your soverain lady list you amende.

And if she comfort you in any wise
 For routhe for pite of your false sthisere,
 So that she weneth it be as you devise,
 And weneth your herte be as she maie here,
 Thus to comfort and somewhat do you chere,
 Then woll these jangle demie of her fall ill,
 And saine ye have her fully at your will.

Lo, how redie ther tonguis ben and prest
 To spekin harme of women causilisse!
 Alas! why might ye not as well saie the best
 As for to demin 'hem thus giltilisse?
 In your herte iwis there is no gentilisse
 That of your own gilt liste thus women fame;
 Now by my trowth me thinke ye be to blame,

For of women comith this worldly wele,
 Wherefore we ought worship 'hem evnmore,
 And though it mischap one we ought to hele,
 For it is all thorough our false lore,
 That daie and night we pain us evnmore
 With many' an othe these women to begile,
 With false talis and many'a wickid wile.

And if falshede should be reckened and told,
 It n'ere in women iwis full trowth were
 Not as in men is by a thousande fold,
 Fro all vici iwis thei standin clere,
 In any thyng that er I could of here,
 But if entisying of these men it make,
 That 'hem to flatteren connin never slake.

I would fain wete where evir ye could here
 Without mens tising women did amis;
 There ye get 'hem ye lie fro yere to yere,
 And many'a gabbyng ye make to 'hem iwis,
 For I could never here ne knowen er this
 Where evir ye could finde in any place
 That evir women besought you of grace.

There ye you painin with al your full might,
 With all your herte and all your businesse,
 To plesin 'hem aye both by daie and night,
 Praying 'hem of ther grace and gentilnesse
 To have pite upon your grete distresse,
 And that thei weldin on your pain have routh,
 And fle you not, sithin ye mene but trowth.

Thus maie seim that thei hem faultlesse,
 And innocent to all your werkis flie;
 And all your craftis that touchin falsnesse,
 Thei knowe 'hem not, ne maie 'hem not espie;
 So swerin ye that ye must nedis die
 But if thei wouldin of ther womanhedde
 Upon your trouthe rewee: that ye be dedde.

And then your lady and your here is quene,
 Ye callin 'hem, and therewith ye sigh sore,
 And saie, My ladie, I trowe that it be sende wo
 In what plite that I have liuid full yore,
 But now I hope that ye wollin no more
 In these painis suffre me for to dwell;
 For of all godenesse i wis ye be the welkenn.

Lo, whiche a paintid processe can ye make
 These harmlesse creaturis for to begile and
 And when thei slepe ye painin you to wake;
 And to bethinke you on many a wickidwile;
 But ye shal se the daie that ye shall curse the while
 That ye so busily did your intent
 'Hem to begile that falshed nevir ment.

For this ye know wel, though I wouldin lie,
 In women is all trouthe and stedfastnesse,
 For in gode faiths I nevir of 'hem sie
 But moche worship, bounte, and gentilnesse,
 Right commyng, faire, and full of mekenesse,
 Gode and glad, and lowlie I you ensure,
 Is this godelic and angelike cature.

And if it happe a man be in distresse,
 She doeth her businesse and her full paine,
 With al her might him to comfort and please,
 If fro his distresse she might hym restrain;
 In worde ne dede wis she woll not faile,
 With al her might she doth her businesse,
 To bryngin hym out of his hevinesse.

Lo, here what gentillesse these women have!
 If we could knowe it for our rudenesse,
 How busie thei be us to kepe and save,
 Bothe in heale and also in sickenesse,
 And alwaie right soe for our distresse,
 In every manir thus shewe their routhe,
 That in 'hem is all godenesse and all trouthe.

And fith we find in 'hem gentillesse, trouthe,
 Worship, bounte, and kindnesse, evirmore,
 Let never this gentillesse through your mouth
 In ther kinde trouthe be ever aught forlore,
 That in women is and hath ben full yore,
 For in reverence of heven is quene,
 We ought to worship all women that bene;

For of all creatures that were got and borne,
 This wote ye well a woman was the best;
 By her was recovered the blis we had lorne,
 And through that woman shall we come to rest,
 And ben isavid, if that our self lest;
 Wherefore me thinkith if that we had grace,
 We oughten honour women in every place.

Therefore I rede that to our liu'is ende,
 Fro this time forth, while that we havin space,
 That we have trespassed pursue to amende,
 Praying our Ladie, the wells of all grace,
 To bryngin us unto that blisfull place
 There as she' and all gode women shal be' in fere,
 In hevin above, among the angils clere.

Explicit.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCY.

*M. Aleyn Secretary to the King of France framed this
 dialogue between a gentleman and a gentlewoman, who
 finding no mercy at her hand dyeth for sorrow.*

HALFE in a dresse, not fully well awaked,
 The goldin Slepe me wrapped undir his wyng,
 Yet not forthy I rose, and welh high naked,
 Al sodainly my self rememberyng
 Of a mattir, levying all othir thyng,
 Which I must doe withoutin more delaie
 For them whiche I ne durst not disobaie.

My charge was this, to translate by and by,
 (All thyng forgive) as parte of my penance,
 A boke callid *La bel Dame sans Mercy*,
 Whiche Maistir Aleine made of remembraunce,
 Chief Secretarie with the Kyng of Fraunce;
 And hertupon a while I stode musyng,
 And in my self greatly imaginynge.

Volume X.

M

What wile I should perform the said processe
 Consideryng by gode advysement
 My uncomynge and my grete simplenesse,
 And ayenward the straite commaundement
 Whiche that I had; and thus in myne entent
 I was vexid and tournd up and doun,
 And yet at last, as in conclusioun,

I cast my clothis on, and went my waie,
 This foresaid charge having in remembraunce,
 Till I came to a lustie grene valaie
 Full of flouris, to se a grete plesaunce,
 And so boldly, with ther benigne suffraunce
 Which redin this boke, touching this materē
 Thus I began, if it plesse you to herē.

Not long ago, ridyng an esie paas,
 I fell in thought of joyful desperate,
 With grete disese and pain, so that I was
 Of all lovirs the most unfortunate,
 Sith by his darte moste cruill full of hate
 The Deth hath take my ladie and maistrisse,
 And left me sole, thus discomfite and mate,
 Sore languishyng and in waie of distresse.

Then said I thus, It fallith me to cesse
 Eithir to rime or ditees for to make,
 And surely to makin a full promesse
 To laugh no more, but wepe in clothis blake
 My joyfull tyme (alas!) now doeth it flake,
 For in my self I fele no manir cse,

Let it be written, (soche fortune (as I take)
Which neither me nor non othir doth please

If it were so my wyll or myne entent
Constraynid were a joyfull thing to write
My penne coude never knowin what it ment
To speke thereof my tongue hath no delite
Tho with my mouth I laugh mochil or lite
Mine eyin should make a countenance untrue
My herte also would have therof despite
The wepyng teris have so large issue

These sicke lovirs I love that to 'hem longes
Which lede ther life in hope of alegeaunce
That is to saie, to make balades and songes
Every of 'hem as thei fele ther grevaunce
For she that was my joye and my plesaunce
Whose soule I prais God of his mercie save
She hath my will, myne hert is ordinaunce
Which lyith here within this tombe igrave

Fro this tyme forthe tyme is to hold my pees
It werieth me this mattir for to tete
Let othir lovirs put 'hem selfe in pees
Their seson is, my tyme is now forgete
Fortune by strength the forcir hath unshete
Wherein was sperde all my worldly richesse
And all the godis which that I have gete
In my best tyme of youth and lustinesse

Love hath me kept undir his govirnaunce
If I misdid God graunt me forgivenesse

If I did well yet felt I no plesaunce,
 It causid neithir joye nor hevynesse,
 For when she dyid that was my maistres,
 My welfare then ymade the same purchase;
 The Deth hath shette my bondis of witnesse,
 Which for nothing myne hert shal never pase. 76

In this grete thought fore troublid in my mind,
 Alone thus rode I all the morrow tide,
 Till at the last it happid me to finde
 The place wherein I cast me to abide
 When that I had no furthir for to ride,
 And as I went my lodgyng to purvaie
 Right sone I herd a little me beside,
 In a gardin, where minstrels gan to plaie: 84

With that anon I went me backir more,
 My self and I, me thought we were inow,
 But twaine that wer my frendis here before
 Had me espied, and yet I wote not how
 Thei came for me; awaiewarde I me drowe,
 Somwhat by force, somwhat by ther request,
 That in no wise I coude my self rescowe,
 But nedis I must come in and se the fest. 92

At my commyng the ladies everichone
 Bad me welcome, God wote right gentillie,
 And made me there every one by one
 A grete dele bettir than I was worthie,
 And of ther grace shewed me grete curtisie
 With gode disport, bicause I should not mourne: 100

That daie I bode still in ther companie,
Whiche was to me a gracious sojourn. 100

The bordis were spred in right lityl space,
The ladies sat eche as she semid best;
There were no dedly seruauntes in the place,
But chosin men, right of the godelyest,
And some there wer, peraventure most freshest,
That sawin ther judgis right full demure,
Without semblaunt eithir to moste or lest,
Notwithstandyng thei had 'hem undir cure. 108

Emong all othir one I gan espie
Which in grete thought ful oftin came and went,
As one that had ben ravished uttirly
In his language not gretly diligent;
His countinaunce he kept with grete turment,
But his desire farre passid his reson,
For er his eye went aftir his entent
Full many a tyme when it was no feson. 116

To makin chere sorely hymself he pained,
And outwardly he fainid grete gladnesse;
To sing also by force he was constrained,
For no plesaunce but verie shamesfastnesse,
For the complainte of his moste hevinesse
Came to his voice alwaic without request,
Like as the soupe of birdis doeth expresse
When thei sing loude in frithe or in forest. 124

Othir there were that servid in the hall,
But none like hym, as aftir myne advise.

For he was pale, and somewhat lene withall,
 His speche also tremblid in ferfull wise,
 And er alone but when he did seruisse;
 All blacke he ware, and no devise but plain;
 Me thought by him, as my witte coud suffice,
 His herte was nothing in his owne demain. 137

To fest 'hem all he did his diligence,
 And well he coud, right as it semid me,
 But evirmore when he was in presence
 His chere was doen, it n' olde none othir be;
 His scholemaistr had soche au&thorite
 That all the while he bode still in the place
 Speke cou'd he not, but upon her beaute
 He lokid still with a right pitons face. 140

With that his hedde he tournid at the last,
 For to beholde the ladies everichone,
 But er in one he set his eye stedfast
 On her whiche that his thought was moste upon,
 For of his eyen the shot I knewe anone,
 Which ferfull was, with right humble requestes;
 Then to my self I fared, By God alone
 Soche one was I or that I sawe these jesses. 148

Out of the prese he went full esily
 To make stable his hevie countinaunce,
 And wote ye well he sighid wondirly
 For his sorowes and wofull remembrance,
 Then in hymself he made his ordinance,
 And forthwithall came to bryng in the messe,

But for to judge his moſte wofull penance
God wote it was a pitous entremelle. 136

Aſtir dinir anone thei 'hem avauced
To daunce above the folk everychone,
And forthwithal this hevie man he daunced
Somtime with twaine and ſomtimis with one;
Unto 'hem all his chere was aſtir one,
Now here, now there, as fell by avinture,
But er emong he drewe to her alone
Whiche that he moſte drede of living creature. 164

To mine adviſe gode was his purveiaunce
When he her choſe to his maiſtreſſe alone,
If that her herte were ſet to his pleaſaunce
As moche as was her beauteous perſone,
For who ſo evir ſetteth his truſt upon
The report of the eyen withoutin more
He might be dedde and gravin undir ſtone
Or er he ſhould his hert'is eſe reſtore. 172

In her failid nothyng that I coude geſſe
One wiſe nor othir, privie nor aperte;
A garifon ſhe was of godelineſſe,
To make a frontier for a lovirs herte;
Right yong and freſhe, a woman full coverte,
Aſſurid wel of porte and eke of chere,
Wel at her eſe, withoutin wo or ſmerte,
All underneth the ſtanderde of Dangere. 180

To ſe the feſt it weried me full ſore,
For hevie joye doeth ſore the herte travaille,

Out of the prese I me withdrawe therefore,
 And set me doune alone behinde a traile
 Full of levis, to se a grete mervaile,
 With grene wrethis iboundin wondirly,
 The levis were so thicke withoutin faile
 That thoroughout no man might me espie. 188

To this ladie he came full curtisly
 When he thought time to daunce with her a trace,
 Set in an herbir made full plesantly,
 Thei ressid 'hem fro thena but lityl space,
 Nigh 'hem were none of a certain compace,
 But onely thei, as farre as I coud se;
 Save the traile there I had ychose my place
 Ther was no more bitwene 'hem two and me. 196

I herd the lovir sighyng wondir fore,
 For aie the more the sorir it hym sought,
 His inward paine he coud not kepe in store,
 Nor for to speke so hardie was he nought;
 His leche was nere, the gretir was his thought:
 He musid fore to conquere his desire,
 For no man maie to more penaunce be brought
 Then in his hete to bryng hym to the fire. 204

The herte began to swell within his chest,
 So fore strainid for anguishe and for pain,
 That all to pecis almoste it to brest,
 When both at ones so fore it did constrain
 Desire was bolde, but shame it gan refrain,
 That one was large, the othir was full close;

No little charge was laied on hym certain
To kepe soche weire and haue so many losse **212**

Full oftentimes to speke himself he pained,
But shamefastnesse and drede failed ovr hale,
Yet at the last so fore he was constrained,
When he full long had put it in debate,
To this ladie right thus then gan he saie,
With dredefull voice, wepyng, halfe in rage,
For me was paynted an unhappie date
When I first had a sight of your visage: **210**

I suffre pain, God wote, full hote brenning,
To cause my deeth, all for my true service,
And I se well ye reeke thereof nothing,
Nor take no hede of it in no kinde wise,
But when I speke after my best advise
Ye reke it nought, but make thereof a game,
And though I sewe so grete an enterpryse
Yet peirith not your worship nor your fame. **218**

Alas! what should it be to' you prejudice
If that a man doe love you faithfully?
To your worship eschewyng every vice,
So am I yours, and will be verily;
I challenge nought of right, and reason why,
For I am whole submit to your service;
Right as you list it be right so will I,
To binde my self where I was in franchise. **236**

L'amant. I saw grete chere
 Though it be so that I can not deserve
 To have your grace, but alwaie live in drede,
 Yet suffre me you for to love and serve
 Without manere of your moste godelihede;
 Both faith and trowth I give your womanhede
 And my service without any calling;
 Love hath me bound withoutin wage or mede,
 To be your man and leve all othir thyng. 244

La Dame. When I first had a sight
 When this ladie had herd al this language
 She gave answer full soft and demurely,
 Without chaungyng of colour or courage,
 Nothyng in haile, but full mesurably;
 Me thinkith, Sir, your thought is grete folly;
 Purpose ye nought your labour for to cese,
 For thinkith not whilis ye live and I
 In this mattir to set your herte in pefe. 252

L'amant. Alas what should I do
 Ther maie none make the pefe but onely ye,
 Which are the ground and cause of all this war,
 For with your eyen the lettirs writtin be
 By whiche I am defied and put asarte;
 Your plefaunt loke, my very lodestarre,
 Was made heraude of thilke same defiaunce
 Whiche untirly behight me for to barre
 My faithfull trust and all myne affyaunce. 260

La Dame.

To live in wo he hath grete fantasie, What er it is
 And of his hert also but slippir holde; Wemyng hath
 That onely for beholding of an eye But fervent love
 Can not abide in pece, as reson wolde; That I unweary
 Other or me if ye list ye maie beholde; And sith so is
 Our eyen are made to loke, why should we spare? As I have said
 I take no kepe neithir of yong ne olde In chesewyng
 Who felith smart I counsaile hym beware. To love

L'amant.

If it be so one hurte another fore This sickness
 In his defeaute that felith the grevaunce; But few persons
 Of very right a man maie do no more; But what the
 Yet reson would it were in remembrance; Of more
 And sith Fortune oft by her chaunce Soche be the
 Hath causid me to suffre all this pain; That I see
 By your beautie, with all the circumstance; And if I
 Why list ye have me in so grete disdain? The harm

La Dame.

To your persone ne have I no disdain; Alas!
 Nor nevir had truelie, ne nought will have; Meche
 Nor right grete love nor hatred in certayn; Of one
 Nor your counsaile to knowe, so God me save; That
 If that soche love be in your minde grave; For my
 That lityl thyng maie doe you displeaunte; But my
 You to begile or make you for to rave; In chesewyng
 I will not causin no soche encombraunce. To make

L'amant.

What er it be that me hath thus purchas'd, o T
 Wenying hath not deceiv'd me certain, And lo he is A
 But fervent love so sore hath me icbas'd, That only T
 That I unwarp am cast in your chain; Can not be T
 And sith so is, as Fortune list ordain; Other to me T
 All my wel fare is in your handis fall, O Our eyes are T
 In eschewyng of more mischevous paine, I take no T
 Who sonist dieth his care is left of all. 297

La Dame.

This sicknesse is right esie to endure, if it be T
 But fewe people it causeth for to die, In his desire T
 But what they mene I knowe it very sure, IO very T
 Of more comfort to drawe the remedie; w. n. r. e. l. o. n. Y
 Soche be there now plainyng full pitouslie And his T
 That fele, God wote, not althing greivous pain; Hath T
 And if so be love hurte so greivouslie By your T
 Lesse harme it wer one sorowful then twain. 300

L'amant.

Alas! Madame, if that it might you please T
 Moche bet it were by waie of gentilnesse T
 Of one sorie to make twain well at ease, For right T
 Then hym to destroie that liveth in distresse, Not by T
 For my desire is neither more nor lesse, If I can T
 But my service to doe for your plesaunce, T
 In eschewyng all manir doublenesse, You to T
 To make two joies in stede of one grevaunce. 308

La Dame.

Of love I feke neither plesauce nor ese,
 Nor have I therein no grete assiaunce;
 Though ye be sick it doeth me nothing plesse,
 Also I take no hede of your plesauce:
 Chese who so will ther hertis to avaunce,
 Free am I now and fre will I endure;
 To be rulid by mann's govirnaunce
 For yerthly gode naie, that I you ensure. 316

L'amant.

Love, which that joy and sorow doth depart,
 Hath set the ladies out of all servage,
 And largely doeth graunt 'hem for ther part
 Lordship and rule of every maner of age;
 The pore servaunt nought hath of advantage
 But what he maie get onely by purchesse,
 And he that ones to Love doeth his homage
 Full oftin tymes dere bought is the richesse. 324

La Dame.

Ladies, be not so simple, thus I mene,
 So dull of witte, so fottid in folie,
 That for wordis which said be of the splene,
 In faire language paintid full plesautlie,
 Whiche ye and mo holde scholis of dailie,
 To make 'hem all grete wondirs to suppose,
 But sone thei can awaie their heddis wrie,
 And to faire speche lightly ther eris close. 332

L'amant.

There is no man that janglith buslie,
 And setteth his herte and al his minde therfore,
 That by reson maie plain so pitoullie
 As he that hath moche heviness in store;
 Whose hedde is whole and saieth that it is sore
 His fainid chere is harde to kepe in mewe,
 But thought, whiche is unfainid evirmore,
 The workis previth as the wordis shewe, 346

La Dame.

Love is subtile, and hath a grete awaite,
 Sharp in working, in gabbing grete plesaunce,
 And can hym venge of soche as by disceite
 Would fele and knowe his secrete govirnaunce,
 And makith 'hem to' obeie his ordinaunce
 By cherefull waies, as in 'hem is supposed,
 But when thei fallin into repentaunce
 Then in a rage ther counsaile is disclosed. 348

L'amant.

Sith for as moche as God and eke Nature
 Hath avauncid love to so hie degre,
 Moche sharpe is the point, thus am I right sure,
 Yet grevith more the faute, where er it be;
Who bath no colde of hete bath no deinte;
 'The' one for that othir askid is expresse;
 And of plesaunce knowith none certainte
 But it be one in thought and heviness. 356

La Dame.

As for plesaunce, it is not alwaie one,
 That you think swete I think it bittir pain;
 Ye maie not me constrain, nor yet right none,
 Astir your luste to love; that is but vain;
 To chalenge love by right was nevir sein,
 But herte assent, before bonde and promise,
 For strength and force ne maie not er attain
 A will that standeth enfeffid in franchise. 364

L'amant.

Right faire ladie! God mote I nevir please
 If that I seke othir right in this case
 But for to shewe you plainly my disese,
 And your mercie to' abide and eke your grace;
 If I purpose your honour to deface,
 Or evir did, God and Fortune me shende,
 And that I ner unrightfully purchace
 One onelie joye unto my liv'is ende. 372

La Dame.

Ye and othir that swere soche othis faste,
 And so condempne and cursin to and fro,
 Full sikirly ye wene your othis laste
 No lengir then the wordis ben ago;
 And God and eke his sainctis laugh also;
 In soche sweryng there is no stedfastnesse,
 And these wretchis that have ful trust thereto
 Astir thei wepe and wailin in distresse. 380

L'amant.

He hath no courage of a man truelie
 That sechith plesaunce worship to dispise,
 Nor to be callid, for he' is not worthie
 The yerth to touch, the aire in no kind wise,
 A trustie herte, a mouthe without feintise,
 Thus by the strength of every manir name,
 And who that laieth his faithe for little prise.
 He lefith both his worship and his fame. 388

La Dame.

A curfid herte, a mouthe that is curteise,
 Full well ye wote thei be not accordyng,
 Yet fainid chere right sone maie 'hem apeise,
 Where of malice is set all ther working,
 Full false semblant thei bere and true semyng,
 Ther name, ther fame, ther tonguis, ben but fained,
 Worship in 'hem is put in forgettyng,
 Nought repentid, nor in no wise complained. 396

L'amant.

Who thinkith ill no gode maie him befall,
 God of his grace graunt eche man his desert!
 But for his love emong your thoughtis all
 As thinke upon my wofull forpwes smert,
 For of my paine whethir your tendir hert
 Of swete pitie be not therewith agrieved,
 And of your grace to me were discovert,
 That by your mene sone should I be releved. 404

La Dame.

A lightsome herte, a folie of plesaunce,
 Are moche bettir the lesse while thei abide;
 Thei make you think and bring you in a traunce,
 But that sikeneffe will sone be remedide;
 Respite your thought, and put all this aside;
 Full gode disporte ywerieth me all daie;
 To helpe nor hurte my will is not aplide;
 Who troweth me not I let hym passe awaie.

L'amant.

Who hath a birde, a faucon, or a hounde,
 That foloweth hym for love in every place
 He cherisheth him and kepith him ful sound,
 Out of his sight he will not hym enchace;
 And I, that set my wittis in this cace
 On you alone, withoutin any chaunge,
 Am put undir, moche farthir out of grace,
 And lesse set by, then othir that be straunge.

La Dame.

Though I make chere to every man about
 For my worship and for myne owne fraunchise,
 To you I n'll doe so withoutin doubt,
 In eschewyng all manir prejudise,
 For wote ye well Love is so little wise,
 And in bileve so lightly will be brought,
 That he takith all at his owne devise
 Of thing God wote that serveth him of nought.

L'amant.

If I by love and by my true servise
 Lese the gode chere that straungirs have alwaie
 Whereof shall serve my trouthe in any wise
 Lesse then to him that cometh and goeth al daie,
 Whiche holdeth of you nothyng, that is no naie?
 Also in you is lost, as to' my femyng,
 All curtisie, whiche of reson will saie
 That *Love for love* were lawfull desiryng. 436

La Dame.

Curtisie is alyd wondir nere
 To worship, whiche hym lovith tendirly,
 And he will not be bounde for no praiere,
 Nor for no giftes, I saie you verily,
 But his gode chere depart full largely
 Where hym lykith, as his conceipt will fall;
 Guerdon constrained, a gift doen thankfully,
 These twain can ner accord, nor never shal. 444

L'amant.

As for guerdon, I seke none in this case,
 For that deserte to me it is to hie,
 Wherefore I aske your pardon and your grace,
 Sith me behovith deth or your mercie;
 To give the gode where it wantith truly
 That were reson and a curtise manere,
 And to your own moche bettir were worthy
 Then to straungirs to shew 'hem lovely chere. 452

La Dame.

What cal ye gode? fain would I that I wist;
 That plesith one an othir smertith sore,
 But of his owne to large is he that list
 Give moche and lesin his gode name therfore;
 One should not make a graunt, little ne more,
 But the request were right well accordyng:
 If worship be not kept and set before
 All that is leste is but a little thyng. 460

L' amant.

Into this worlde was foundin nevir none,
 Nor undir hevin creäture ibore,
 Nor nevir shall, save onely your persone,
 To whom your worship touchith halfe so sore
 But me, whiche have no feson lesse ne more
 Of youth ne age but still in your service;
 I have no eyen, no wit, nor mouthe, in store,
 But all be givin to the same office. 462

La Dame.

A ful grete charge hath he withoutin faile
 That his worship kepith in sikirnesse,
 But in daungir he settith his travaile
 That fessith it with othirs businesse;
 To hym that longith honour and noblesse
 Upon none othir should not be awaite,
 For of his owne so moche hath he the lesse
 That of othir moche foloweth the conceits. 476

L'amant.

Your eyen hath set the print which that I sele
 Within my herte, that where so er I go
 If I doe thyng that sounith unto wele
 Nedes must it cum from you and fro no mo;
 Fortune will this, that I for wele or wo
 My life endure, your mercy abidyng,
 And verie right will that I thinke also
 Of your worship above all othir thyng. 484

La Dame.

To your worship se well, for that is nede,
 That ye spende not your seson all in vain;
 As touchyng myne I rede you take no hede,
 By your follie to put your selfe in pain;
 To ovrcome is gode and to restrain
 An herte whiche is decevid follilie,
 For *Worse it is to breke then bowe certain;*
Bettir to bowe then to fall sodainly. 492

L'amant.

Now, faire ladie! thinke sith it first began
 That Love hath set mine herte undir his cure
 It nevir might, ne truelie I ne can,
 None othir serve while I shall here endure,
 In most fre wise thereof I make you sure,
 Which maie not be withdraw, this is no naie;
 I must abide all manir advinture,
 For I ne maie put to nor take awaie. 500

La Dame.

I holde it for no gift in sothfastnesse
 That one offirith where it is forsake,
 For soche a gifte' is abandonyng expresse,
 That with worship ayen maie not be take;
 He hath an herte full fell that list to make
 A gift lightlie that put is to refuse,
 But he is wise that soche conceipt will flake,
 So that hym nede neithir studie ne muse.

L'amant.

He should not muse that hath his service spent
 On her whiche is a ladie honourable,
 And if I spende my time to that entent
 Yet at the lest I am not reprovable
 Of fainid harte, to thinke I am unable,
 Or I mistoke when I made this request,
 By whiche Love hath of enterprise notable
 So many hertis gottin by conquest.

La Dame.

If that ye liste doe aftir my counsaile
 Seche a fairir and of more highir fame,
 Whiche in service of love will you prevaile,
 Aftir your thought, accordyng to the same;
 He hurtith bothe his worship and his name
 That follily for twain himself will trouble,
 And he also lesith his aftir game
 That surely can not set his pointis double.

L'amant.

This your counsaile, by ought that I can se,
 Is bettir saied than doen, to myne advise,
 Though I beleve it not forgive it me:
 Mine herte is soche, so whole without feintise,
 That I ne maie give credence in no wise
 To thyng whiche is not sounyng unto truth:
 Othir counsaile I se' is but fantasie
 Save of your grace to shewe pitie and ruth,

La Dame.

I holde hym wise that workith no folie,
 And when hym list can leve and part therfro,
 But in connyng he is to lerne truelie
 That would himself conduite and can not so;
 And he that will not astir counsaile doe
 His sute he puttith into desperaunce,
 And all the gode that should yfall hym to
 Is lost and dedde clene out of remembraunce.

L'amant.

Yet woll I shewe this mattir faithfullie
 Whilis I live, what evir be my chauce,
 And if it hap that in my truthe I die
 Then deth shall doe to me no displeaunce,
 But when that I by your harde sufferance
 Shall die so true, and with so grete a pain,
 Yet shall it doe me moche the lesse grevaunce
 Then for to live a false lovir certain.

La Dame.

Of me get ye right noght, this is no fable;
 I will to you be neithir hard nor straite,
 And right will, not no man customable
 To thinke ye should be sure of my conceite;
 Who sechith sorowe his be the receite;
 Othir counsaile can I not fele nor fe,
 Nor for to lerne I cast me not to' awaite;
 Who will thereof let hym assaie for me. 3536

L'amant.

Ones must it be assaied, that is no naie;
 With soche as be of reputacion,
 And of true love the right honour to paie;
 Of fre hartis gottin by due raunsome,
 For frewil holdith this opinion,
 That it is grete duresse and discomforte
 To kepe a herte in so straite a prision
 That hath but one bodie for his disporte. 3564

La Dame.

I knowe so many causis marveilous
 That I must nede of reson thinke certain
 Soche avinture is wondir perilous,
 And yet well more the coming backe again;
 Gode or worship thereof is seldome fene,
 Where I ne will make any soche araie,
 As for to finde a plesauce but baraine
 When it shall cost so dere the first assaie. 3572

L'amant.

Ye have no cause to doubt of this matter,
 Nor you to meue with no soche fantasie,
 To put me farre all out as a straunger,
 For your godenesse can thinke and well advise
 That I have made aprise in every wise,
 By whiche my trathe sheweth opin euidence;
 My long abiding and my true service
 Maie well be knowne by plain experience. 38e

La Dame.

Of verie right he maie be callid true,
 And so must he be take in every place,
 That can discerne and let as he ne knewe,
 And kepe the gode if he it maie purchase;
 For who that praieth or swereth in any case
 Right well ye wote in that no trouth is preued;
 Soch hath there ben and ar that gettin grace,
 And lese it sone when thei have it acheued. 388

L'amant.

If trathe me cause, by vertue foverain,
 To shewe gode love and alwaie find contrarie,
 And cherishe the whiche fleeth me with the pain,
 This is to me a lovely aduersarie,
 When that Pitie, whiche long on slepe doth tarie,
 Hath set the fine of all my hevinesse,
 Yet her comfort, to me mosse necessarie,
 Shall set my will more sure in stablenesse. 396

La Dame.

The woful wight what maie he think or say,
 The contrarie of all joye and gladnesse,
 A sicke bodie, his thought is ferre alwaie
 From 'hem that felin no sore nor sickenesse;
 Thus hurtis ben of divers businesse,
 Whiche love hath putt unto grete hinderaunce,
 And truthe also put in forgetfulnesse,
 When thei full sore begin to sigh askaunce. 604

L'amant.

Now God defende but he be harmelesse
 Of all worship or gode that maie befall
 That to werst tournith by his leudenesse
 A gift of grace or any thyng at all
 That his ladie vouchsafe upon hym call,
 Or cherish hym in honourable wise;
 In that defeaute what er he be that fall
 Deservith more then deth to suffre twise. 612

La Dame.

There is no judge iset on soche trespace,
 By whiche of right love maie recovered be,
 One cursith fast, an othir doth manace,
 Yet dyith none, as farre as I can se,
 But kepe ther course alwaie in one degre,
 And evirmore ther labour doeth encrese
 To bryng ladies, by ther grete subtilte,
 For othirs gilte, in sorowe and disese. 620

L'amant.

All be it so one doeth so grete offence
 And is not dedde nor put to no justice,
 Right well I wote hym gainith no defence,
 But he must ende in full mischevous wise,
 And all evir saied God will hym dispise,
 For faished is all full of curfidnesse,
 That his worship may ner have entirprise
 Where it reignith and hath the wilfulnesse. 628

La Dame.

Of that have thei no grete fere now a daise,
 Soche as will saie and maintain it thereto,
 That stedfast truthe is nothyng for to praise
 In 'hem that kepe it long in wele or wo,
 Their busie hertis passin to and fro,
 Thei be so well reclaimid to the lure,
 So well lernid 'hem to withholde also,
 And al to change when love should best endure. 636

L'amant.

When one hath set his herte in stable wise
 In soche a place as is bothe gode and true
 He should not flit, but doe forthe his service
 Alwaie withoutin change of any newe:
 As sone as love beginnith to remewe
 All plesaunce goeth anone in lityl space;
 As for my partie that shall I eschue
 While that the soule abidith in his place. 644

L'amant.

To love truly there as it ought of right
 Ye maie not be mistakin doutlesse,
 But ye be foule discevid in your sight
 By your light understanding as I gesse,
 Yet maie we well repele your businesse,
 And unto reson have some attendaunce,
 Moche bettir than to' abide by simplesnes
 The feble foccouris of desperaunce. 652

L'amant.

Reson, counsaile, wisedome, and gode advise,
 Ben undir love arrestid everichone,
 To whiche I can accorde in every wise,
 For thei ben not rebell but still as stone;
 Ther will and myne be medlid all in one,
 And therwith boundin with so strong a chain,
 That as in 'hem departyng shall be none,
 But pitie breke the mightie bonde atwain. 660

La Dame.

Ye love not your self, what evir ye be,
 That in love stande subject in every place,
 And of your wo if ye have no pite
 Othirs pite bileve not to purchase,
 But be fullie assured, as in this case,
 I am alwaie undir one ordinaunce;
 To havin bettir trust not astir grace,
 And all that levith take to your plesaunce. 668

O ij

L'amant.

I have my hope so sure and so steadfast
 That soche a ladie should not lacke pitie,
 But now, alas! it is shrit up so fast
 That Daungir sheweth on me his crueltie,
 And if she fe the vertue faile in me
 Of true service, though she doe faile also
 No wondir were; but this is my surete,
 I must suffre whiche waie that er it go. 676

La Dame.

Leve this purpose, I rede you for the best,
 For the lengir ye kepe it is in vain,
 The lesse ye get as of your hert'is rest,
 And to rejoyce it shall you ner attain;
 When ye abide gode hope to make you fain
 Ye shall be founde asottid in dotage,
 And in the ende ye shall knowe for certain
 That hope shall paie the wretchis for ther wage. 684

L'amant.

Ye saie as fallith moste for your plesaunce,
 And your powir is grete, all this I fe,
 But hope shall ner out of my remembraunce,
 By whiche I fele so grete aduersite,
 For when Nature hath set in you plente
 Of all godenesse, by vertue and by grace,
 He ner assemblid 'hem, as semid me,
 To put Pitie out of his dwellyng place. 692

La Dame.

Pitie of right ought to be resonable,
 And to no wight do grete disavauntage,
 There as is nede it should be profitable,
 And to the pitous shewyng no damage:
 If a ladie will doe so grete outrage
 To shewe pitie and cause her owne debate,
 Of soche pitie comith dispitous rage,
 And of soche love also right dedly hate. 760

L'amant.

To comfort 'hem that live all comfortlesse
 That is no harme, but comfort to your name,
 But ye that have a herte of soche duresse,
 And a faire ladie', I must affirme the same,
 If I durst saie, ye winne all this defame
 By cruiltie, whiche sittith you full ill,
 But if pitie, whiche maie all this attain,
 In your high herte maie rest and tary still. 768

La Dame.

What er he be that saieth he lovith me;
 And paraventure I leve well it be so,
 Ought he be wrothe, or should I blamid be,
 Though I did not as he would have me doe?
 If I medlid with soche or othir moe
 It might be callid pitie mercileffe,
 And afterward if I should live in wo
 Then to repent it were to late I gesse. 776

L'amant.

O marble herte! and yet more harde parde,
 Whiche mercie maie not perce for no labour,
 More strong to bowe then is a mighty tre,
 What availeth you to shewe so grete rigour!
 Plefeth it you more to se me die this hour
 Before your eyen, for your disport and plaie,
 Then for to shewe some comfort and soccours
 To respite deth, whiche chasith me alwaie? 724

La Dame.

Of your disease ye may have allegeaunce,
 And as for myne I let it ovir flake,
 Also ye shall not die for my plefaunce,
 Nor for your hele I can no suretie make;
 I will not hurte my self for othirs sake;
 Wepe thei, laugh thei, or sing thei, I waraunt
 For this mattir so will I undirtake
 That none of 'hem shall make therof avaunt. 732

L'amant.

I can not skill of love by God alone,
 I have more cause to wepe in your presence,
 And well ye wote avauntour am I none,
 For certainly I love bettir silence:
 One should not love by his hert's credence,
 But he were sure to kepe it secretlie,
 For a vauntour is of no revèrence
 When that his tongue is his moste enemie. 740

La Dame.

Male bouch in court hath grete commaundement,
 Eche man studieth to saie the worst he maie,
 These false lovirs in this tyme now present
 Thei servin best to jangle as a jaie;
 The moste secrete iwis yet some men saie
 How he mistrustid is in some partise,
 Wherefore to ladies when men speke or saie
 It should not be bilevid in no wise. 748

L'amant.

Of gode and ill shall be and is alwaie,
 The world is soche; *The yerth is not al plain*;
 Thei that be gode the prose sheweth every daie,
 And othir wise grete villonie certain;
 It' is not reson though one his tongue distain
 With cursid speche to doe hymself a shame
 That soche refuse should wrongfully remain
 Upon the gode renomid in ther fame. 756

La Dame.

Soch as be nought, when thei here tidinges new
 That eche trespas shall lightly have pardon,
 Thei that pursuin to be gode and true
 Will not set by none ill disposicion,
 To continue' in every gode condicion
 Thei are the first that fallin in damage,
 And full frely the hertis habandon
 To lityl faithe with soft and faire language. 764

L'amant.

Now knowe I well of verie certainte
 If one doe truelie yet shall he be shente,
 Sith all manir of iustice and pite
 Is banished out of a ladies entente;
 I can not se but all is at one stente,
 The gode, the ill, the vice, and eke the vertue;
 Soche as be gode soche have the punishmente
 For the trespase of 'hem that live untrue. 772

La Dame.

I have no powir you to do grevaunce,
 Nor to punishe none othir creature,
 But to eschewin the more encombraunce,
 To kepe us from you all I hold it sure,
For False Semblaunce bath a face full demure,
 Lightlie to catche these ladies in a waite,
 Wherefore we must, if we will here endure,
 Make right gode watch: lo! this is my conceite. 780

L'amant.

Sith that of grace a godely worde not one
 Maie now be had, but alwaie kept in store,
 I' appele to God, for he maie here my mone,
 Of the duresse which grevith me so fore,
 And of pite I complaine furthirmore,
 Whiche he forgate in all his ordinaunce,
 Or els my life to have endid before,
 Whiche so sone am put out of remembraunce. 788

La Dame.

My herte nor I have doen you no forfeite
By whiche ye should complaine in any kinde;
Nothyng hurtith you but your own conceite;
Be judge your self, for so ye shall it finde:
Thus alwaie let this sinke into your minde
That your desire shall ner recovered be;
Ye noye me sore in wastyng all this winde,
For I have saied inough, as semith me. 796

This wofull man rose up in all his paine,
And departid with wepyng countinaunce,
His wofull herte almoste to braste in twaine,
Full like to die, walkyng forthe in a traunce,
And sayid, Deth, come forthe, thy self avaunce,
Or that myne herte forget his proprietie,
And make shortir all this wofull penance
Of my pore life, full of adversitie. 804

Fro thens he went, but whithir wist I nought,
Nor to what part he drewe in sothfastnesse,
But he no more was in his ladie's thought,
For to the daunce anone she gan her dresse;
And aftirward one tolde me thus expresse,
He rent his heer for anguishe and for pain,
And in hymself toke so grete hevinesse
That he was dedde within a daie or twain. 812

L'ENVOY.

The true lovirs thus I beseche you all
Soche advintures flie 'hem in every wise,
And as peple defamid ye 'hem call,

For thei truelie do you grete prejudice
 His castelles strong stuffid with ordinaunce,
 For thei have had long tyme by their office
 The whole countrey of Love in obeisaunce. 819

And ye ladies, or what estate ye be,
 Of whom Worship hath choise his dwellyng place,
 For Godd'is love doe no soche crueltie,
 Nor in no wise ne folowe not the trace
 Of her that here is namid right wisely,
 Whiche by reson me semith in this cace
 Maie be callid *La belle Dame sans Mercy.* 826

Go, lityl Boke, God sende the gode passage!
 Chese well thy waie, be simple of manere,
 Loke thy clothyng be like thy pilgrimage,
 And specially let this be thy praier
 Unto 'hem all that the will rede or here,
 Where thou art wrong after ther helpe to call
 The to correcte in any parte or all. 833

Praie 'hem also with thine humble servise
 Thy boldnesse to pardon in this cace,
 For els thou art not able in no wise
 To make thy self appere in any place;
 And furthirmore besече 'hem of ther grace
 By ther favour and supportacion
 To take in gre this rude Translacion, 840

The which God wote standish full destitute
 Of eloquence, of metre, and colours,
 Like as a best nakid without refute

Upon a plain to abide all manir showers:
 I can no more but aske of 'hem socours
 At whose request thou wer made in this wise,
 Commaundynge me with body and servise. 847

Right thus I make an ende of this proffes,
 Besechyng hym that all hath in balaunce
 That no true man be vexid canselesse
 As this man was, whiche is of remembraunce;
 And all that doen ther faithfull observaunce,
 And in ther trouth purpose 'hem to endure,
 I praie God sende 'hem bettir avinture. 854

Explicit.

THE ASSEMBLE OF LADIES.

*A gentlewoman dreameth that she seeth a greate number of
 Ladies put up their billes of complaint before a judge, who
 promisetb to relieve their grievances.*

IN Septembre', at the fallinge of the lese,
 The freshe ceson was altogidir done,
 And of the corne was gathirid the shefe,
 In a gardine, aboute twayne aftir none,
 Ther were Ladies walking, as was ther wone,
 Foure in nombre, as to my minde dothe fall,
 And I the fishe, the simplist of 'hem al. 7

Of gentilwomen faire there were also
 Disporting 'hem everiche aftir her gise,
 In crosse aleis walking by two and two,
 And some alone, aftir ther fantasies;
 Thus occupied we were in diverse wise,
 And yet in trouthe we were not al alone,
 There werin knightes and squiris many one. 14

Wherof I served? one of 'hem askid me:
 I said ayen, as it fel in my thought,
 To walke aboute the mase in certainte,
 As a hedeless woman that nothing rought.
 He askid me ayen whom that I sought,
 And of my colour why I was so pale?
 Forsothe (quod I) and therby lithe a tale. 21

That must me wete, (quod he) and that anone:
 Tel on, let fe, and make no tarying.
 Abide, (quod I) ye ben a haffie one;
 I let you wete it is no lityl thing,
 But for bicause ye have a grete longing
 In your desire this processe for to here
 I shal you tel the plaine of this matere. 28

It happid thus, that in an astirnone
 My selauship and I by one assent,
 Whan al othir besineffis were done,
 To passe our time into this mase we went,
 And toke our waies eche aftir our entent,
 Some went inward and went they had gon out,
 Some stonde in the mid and looked all about. 35

And, loth to say, some were ful ferre behinde,
 And right anon as ferforthe as the best,
 Othir there were so massid in ther minde
 Al waies were gode for 'hem both est and west;
 Thus went they forth and had but lityl rest,
 And some ther courage dyd 'hem fore assaile,
 For very wrathe they dyd step o'er the raile; 42

And as they sought 'hem selvin to and fro
 I gate my self a lityl avauntage,
 Al forweried I might no furthir go,
 Though I had won right grete for my viage,
 So came I forthe into a straite passage,
 Which brought me to an herbir faire and grene,
 Ymade with benchis ful crafty and elene; 49

That as me thoughtin there might no creture
 Devise a bette by dewe proporcioun,
 Safe it was closid wel I you ensure,
 With masonrye of compace enviroun,
 Ful secretly with stairis goyng down
 In myddes the place with turning whele certain,
 And upon that a potte of margelaine, 56

With margerettes growinge in ordinaunce
 To shewe 'hem selfe as folke went to and fro,
 That to beholde it was a grete plesaunce,
 And how they were accompainid with mo,
 Ne momblisnesse and sonènesse also,
 The poure penfis were not dislogid there,
 Ne, God wote ther place was evèry where. 63

The flore and bench was pavid faire and smothe
 With stonis square of many divers hewe,
 So wel joynid, that for to say the soth
 Al semid one, that no one othir knewe,
 And undirnith the stremis newe and newe,
 As silvir bright, springing in soche a wise
 That whence it came ye coude it not devise. 70

A lityl while ywas I al alone
 Beholding wel this delectable place,
 My felawship were coming everichone,
 So muste we nedis abyde for a space,
 Remembiring of many divers cace
 Of tyme ypassid yore with sighis depe,
 I set me downe, and there I fel aslepe. 77

And as I slept me thought there came to me
 A gentylwoman metely of stature,
 Of grete worship she semid for to be,
 Atyrid wel, not high, but by mesure,
 Her countinaunce full sad was and demure,
 Her colours blewe al that she had upon;
 Ther ne came no mo but her selfe alone. 84

Her gowne wel was embraudrid certainly
 With stonis sette aftir her owne devise
 In her purfillis, her worde by and by
Bien & Loyalement, as I coude devise;
 Than praide I her in any manir wise
 That of her name I might have remembraunce;
 She said she was callid Perseveraunce. 91

So furthirmore to spekin was I bolde,
 Where she dwellid I prayed her for to say?
 And she againe ful curtisly me tolde,
 My dwelling is and hath be many' a day
 With a lady. What lady? I you pray.
 Of gret estate, thus warne I you (quod she.)
 What cal ye her? Her name is Loyalte.

98

In what office stande ye or what degre?
 (Quod I to her) that would I wete right faine.
 I am, (quod she) unworthy though I be,
 Of her chambre her ushir in certaine,
 This rodde I bere as for a token plaine,
 Lyke as ye knowe the rule in soche service
 Apertaining is to the same office.

105

She chargid me by her commaundement
 To warne you and your felawes everichone
 That ye shulde come there as she is present
 For a counsaile whiche shall be nowe anone,
 Or sevin dayis be comin and gone;
 And furthirmore, she bad that I shulde say
 Excusis there might be none nor delay.

112

Anothir thing was not forget behinde,
 Whiche in no wise I wolde but that ye knewe;
 Remembre wel and bere it in your minde
 Al your felawes and ye must come in blewe
 Evèrilyche, your matirs for to sewe,
 With more, whiche I pray you to thinke upon,
 Your wordis on your selvis everychon.

119

And be not abashed in no manir wise,
 As many ben, in soche an high presence;
 Make your request as ye can best devise,
 And she gladly wol yeve you audience;
 There is no grese nor no manir offence
 Wherin ye fele that your herte is displeased
 But with her help right sone ye shal be esed. 126

I am right glad (quod I) ye tel me this,
 But there is non of us that knoweth the waie.
 As of your way (quod she) ye shal not mis,
 Ye shal have one to gyde you day by day
 Of my felawes, I can not bettir say,
 Soche one as shal tel you the way ful right,
 And Diligence this gentilwoman hight, 133

A woman of right famous govirnaunce,
 And wel cherished, I tel you in certaine,
 Her selauship shal do you grete plesaunce;
 Her porte is soch, her manirs trewe and plaine,
 She with glad chere wold do her besy paine
 To bring you there. Now farewel; I have done.
 Abyde, said I, ye may not go so sone. 140

Why so? (quod she) and I have ferre to go,
 To yeve warning in many divers place
 To your felawes and so to othir mo,
 And well ye wote I have but lytil space.
 Now yet, (quod I) ye must tel me this cace,
 If we shal any men unto us cal.
 Not one (quod she) may come amonges you all. 147

Not one, than? said I: eigh, *Benedicite!*
 What have I done? I pray you tel me that.
 Nowe by my lyfe I trowe but wel, (quod she)
 But er I can byleve there is somewhat,
 And for to saye you trouthe more can I nat;
 In questions I may nothing be to large;
 I meddle must no furthir then my charge. 154

Than thus, (quod I) do me to undirstande
 What place is there this lady is dwelling?
 Forsothe (quod she) and one sought al this lande
 Fairir is none, though it were for a king,
 Devifid wel, and that in every thing,
 The touris hie ful plefaunt shal ye finde,
 With phanis fresh turning with every wynde; 161

The chambris and the parlirs of a forte,
 With bay windowes godely as may be thought,
 As for daunsing and othir wise disporte
 The galeries be all right well ywrought,
 That wel I wote if ye were thydir brought,
 And take gode hede therof in every wise,
 Ye wol it thinke a very paradise. 168

What hight the place? (quod I) now say me that.
 Plefaunt Regarde, (quod she) to tell you plaine.
 Of very trouth, (quod I) and wote ye what?
 It may right wel be callid so certaine:
 But furthirmore this wold I wit right fain,
 What I shulde do as sone as I come there,
 And astir whom that I may best enquire? 175

A gentilwoman portir of the yate
 There shal ye finde, her name is Countinaunce,
 If ye so hap ye come erly or late
 Of her wer gode to have some acquaintaunce,
 She can you tel howe ye shal you avaunce,
 And howe to come to her ladye's prefence;
 To her wordis I rede ye geve credence. 182

Nowe it is time that I shulde parte you fro,
 For in gode faithe I have grete businesse.
 I wote right wel (quod I) that it is so,
 And I thanke you of your grete gentillesse,
 Your comforte hath yevin me hardinesse,
 That nowe I shal be bolde withoutin faile
 To do' aftir your advice and gode counsaile. 189

Thus partid she, and I lefte all alone;
 With that I sawe (as I behelde aside)
 A woman come, a verie godely one,
 And forth withal as I had her aspid
 Me thought anone it shoulde be the gide,
 And of her name anone I did enquire;
 Ful womanly she yave me this answere: 196

I am (quod she) but a simple cature,
 Sent from the courte, my name is Diligence;
 As sone as I myght come, I you ensure,
 I taried not aftir I had licence:
 And nowe that I am come to your prefence,
 Loke, what service I can you do or may
 Commaundith me; I can no furthir say. 203

I thankid her, and prayed her to come nere,
 Bycause I woulde se how she was araide;
 Her gown was blew, dreslid in gode manere,
 With her devise, her worde also, that saide
Tant que je puis, and I was wel apaide;
 And than wist I, withoutin any more,
 It was ful trewe that I had herde before. 210

Though we toke nowe before a litil space
 It were ful gode (quod she) as I coude gessie.
 Howe farre (quod I) have we unto the place?
 A daye's journey, (quod she) but litil lesse;
 Wherefore I rede that now we outwarde dresse
 For I suppose our felawship is past,
 And for nothings I wolde not we were the' last. 217

Than departid we' at springing of the daye,
 And forthe we wente a softe and esy pace,
 Til at the last we were on our journey
 So far outwarde that we might se the place;
 Nowe let us rest (quod I) a litil space,
 And say we as devoutly as we can
 A *Pater noster* for Saint Julian. 224

With al my herte; I assent with gode wil;
 Moch bettir shal we spede whan we have done.
 Than taried we and said it every dyl;
 And whan the day was past farre astir none
 We sawe a place, and thidir came we sone,
 Whiche rounde aboute was closid with a wal,
 Seminge to me full like an hospitall. 231

There found I one had brought all min aray,
 (A gentil woman of mine acquaintaunce)
 I have mervaile (quod I) what manir way
 Ye had knowlege of al this ordinaunce.
 Yes, yes, (quod she) I herde Perseveraunce
 Howe she warnid her felawes everichone,
 And what aray ye shouldin have upon. 238

Nowe for my love (quod I) this I you praye,
 Sith ye have take upon you all the paine,
 That ye wolde helpe me on with mine araye,
 For wit ye wel I wolde be gone right faine.
 Al this prayir us nedith not certaine,
 (Quod she againe;) come of, and hye you sone,
 And ye shal se anone it shal be done. 245

But this I doute me gretly, wote ye what?
 That my felawes be passid by and gone.
 I warnè you (quod she) that are they nat,
 For here they shall assemble everichone,
 Notwithstandinge I counsaile you anone
 Make you redy, and tary you no more,
 It is no harme though ye be there before. 252

So than I drestid me in mine araye,
 And asked her whethir it were wel or no?
 It is right well (quod she) unto my pay,
 Ye nede not care to what place er ye go:
 And whiles that she and I debatid so
 Came Diligence and sawe me al in blewe;
 Sistir, (quod she) right wel broke ye your newe! 259

Discrecion Purveyour.

Than wente we forth and met at avinture
A yonge woman, an officir seminge;
What is your name? (quod I) tell, gode creture.
Discrecion, (quod she) without lesinge.
And where (quod I) is your most abidinge?
I have (quod she) this office of purchase,
Chefe Purveyour that longith to this place. 266

Acquayntaunce Herbyger.

Faire love! (quod I) in al your ordinaunce
What is her name that is the herbigere?
Forsothe (quod she) her name is Acquaintaunce,
A woman of right gracious manere.
Then thus, (quod I) what straungirs have ye here?
But fewe (quod she) of high degre ne lowe,
Ye be the first, as ferforth as I knowe. 273

Countinaunce Porter.

Thus with talis we came streight to the yate,
This yonge woman departid was and gone,
Came Diligence, and knockid fast thereat.
Who is without? (quod Countinaunce anone.)
Truly, (quod I) fayre sistir, here is one.
Which one? (quod she) and therewithal she lough.
I Diligence; ye knowe me wel ynoughe. 280

Than opened she the gate, and in we go;
With wordis faire she saide full gentilly,
Ye are welcome ywis; are ye no mo?

Nat one (quod she) save this woman and I.
 Now than (quod she) I pray you hertily
 Takith my chaumbre for a while to rest
 Til your felawis come; I holde it best. 287

I thanked her, and forth we go everichone
 Til her chambre withoutin wordis mo,
 Came Diligence and toke her leve anone.
 Where er ye lyst (quod I) nowe may ye go,
 And I thanke you right hertily also
 Of your labour, for whiche God do you mede;
 I can no more, but Jesu be your spede! 294

Than Countinaunce thus askid me anone,
 Your selauship where be they all? (quod she.)
 For sothe (quod I) they' are cominge everichone,
 But where they are I knowe no certainte,
 Without I may 'hem at this windowe se;
 Here wil I stande a waiting here amonge,
 For wel I wote they wil not hence be longe. 301

Thus as I stode musing ful busily
 I thought to take gode hede of her aray;
 Her gowne was blewe, this wote I verily,
 Of gode facyon, and furrid wel with gray,
 Upon her sleve her worde, this is no nay,
 Whiche said thus, as my pennè can endite,
A moy, qui voy, writin with lettirs white. 308

Then forth withal she came streight unto me,
 Your wordes (quod she) fain wold I that I knewe.
 Forsothe (quod I) ye shal wel knowe and se,

And for my worde I have none, this is trew;
 It is ynough that my clothing be blewe,
 As here before I had commaundement,
 And so to do I am right well content. 315

Largeffe Stewarde.

But tel me this I pray you hertilye,
 The steward here, say me what is her name?
 She hight Largeffe, I say you furily,
 A faire lady, and of right noble fame,
 Whan ye her se ye wil reporte the same,
 And undir her to byd you welcomè al
 There is Belchier, marshal of the hal. 322

Now al this while that ye here tary still
 Your own matirs ye may wel have in mind;
 But tel me this, have ye brought any bill?
 Ye, ye, (quod I) and els I were behinde;
 Where is there one, tel me, that I may finde
 To whom that I may shewe my matirs plaine?
 Surely (quod she) unto the chambirlaine. 329

Remembraunce Chamberlaine.

The chambirlaine, (quod I) and say ye trewe?
 Ye, verily, (said she;) by myne advise
 Ben nat aferde; unto her lowlye sewe.
 It shal be done (quod I) as ye devyse,
 But I must knowe her name in any wise.
 Trewly (quod she) to shewe you in substaunce,
 Withouten fainyng, her name is Remembraunce. 336

The secretarie may not be forget,
 For she dothe right moche in every thinge,
 Wherefore I rede when ye have with her mete
 Your matere whole tel her without faininge;
 Ye shal her fynde ful gode and ful lovinge.

Tel me her name (quod I) of gentilnesse.
 By my gode sothe (quod she) Avisenesse. 343

That name (quod I) for her is passing gode,
 For every byl and schedule she must se.
 Nowe gode, (quod I) come stande there as I stode,
 My felawes be cominge; yondir they be.
 Is it in jape, or say ye sothe? (quod she)
 In jape! nay, nay, I say you for certayne;
 Se how thei come togethir twain and twaine. 350

Ye say ful sothe, (quod she) that is no nay,
 I se coming a godely company.
 They ben soch folke, (quod I) dare I to say,
 That lyst to love, thinkith it verily,
 And for my love I pray you saythfully
 At any tyme whan they upon you call
 That ye wol be gode frende unto 'hem all. 357

Of my frendship (quod she) they shal not misse,
 And for their ese to put therto my paine.
 God yelde it you! (quod I) but take you this,
 Howe shal we know who is the chambirlayne?
 That shal ye wel know by her word certaine.
 What is her worde, systir? I pray you say.
Plus ne purroye, thus writith she alwaye. 364

Thus as we stode togydir she and I;
 Even at the yate my felawes were echone;
 So met I 'hem (as me thought was godely)
 And bade 'hem welcome al by one and one;
 Then came forth Countinaunce to us anone,
 Ful hertily, Faire sistirs al; (quod she)
 Ye be right welcome into this countre.

I counsaile you to take a litil rest
 In my chambre, if it be your plessaunce;
 Whan ye be there me thinke it for the best;
 That I go in and cal Perseveraunce;
 Bycause she is one of your acquaintaunce;
 And she also wil tel you every thinge;
 Howe ye shal be ruler of your cominge.

My felawes al and I, by one advise,
 Were wel agreed to do lyke as she sayde;
 Than we began to dresse us in our gise;
 That folke shoulde say we were not unpurvelde;
 And gode wagirs among us there we laide
 Whiche of us was atirid moste godelest;
 And of us al whiche shulde be praisid best.

The portir came and brought Perseveraunce;
 She welcomid us in curteise manere;
 Thinke not long (quod she) of your attendaunce;
 I wil go speke unto the herbigere;
 That she may purvey for your lodging here;
 Than wil I go unto the chambirlaine
 To speke for you, and come anone againe.

And when that she departid was and gone
 We sawe folkis coming without the wal,
 So gret peple, that nombre coude we none,
 Ladies they were, and gentil women al,
 Clothid in blew, echone her worde withal,
 But for to knowe her worde or her devise
 They came so thicke I ne might in no wise 399

With that anone came in Perseverance,
 And where I stode she came straight unto me;
 Ye ben (quod she) of min olde acquaintaunce,
 You to enquire the boldir wolde I be
 What worde they here eche after her degre;
 I you pray tel it me in secret wise,
 And I shall kepe it close on warrantise 406

We ben five ladies (quod I) al in fere,
 And gentil women four in company,
 When they begin to opin ther matere
 Than shal ye knowe ther wordis by and by,
 But as for me I have none venily,
 And so I tolde Couptinaunce here before
 Al min aray is blew, what nedith more? 413

Nowe then (quod she) I wol go backe againe
 That ye may have knowlege what ye shuld do,
 In soth (quod I) if ye wolde take the paine
 Ye dyd right moche for us if ye dyd so,
 The rathir spede the sonir may we go;
 Grete coste alway there is in tarynge,
 And longe to sewe it is a wery thinge 420

Then partid she and came againe alone; 103
 Ye must (quod she) come to the chambirlayne.
 We be nowe redy (quod I) everychone
 To folowe you whan er ye list certaine;
 We have none eloquente, to tel you plaine,
 Beseeching you we may be so excused
 Our trewe meaning that it be not refused. 107

Then went we forth aftir Perseverance;
 To se the prees it was a wondir case,
 There for to passe it was a grette combrance;
 The people stode so thicke in every place
 Nowe stande ye stil (quod she) a litle space;
 And for your ese somewhat I shal assay
 Yf I can make you any bettir way. 114

And forth she gothe among them everychon;
 Making a way that we might thorough passe
 More at our ese, and whan she had so done
 She beckende us to come where as she was,
 So aftir her we felowed more and las;
 She brought us streight unto the chambirlayne,
 There lefte she us, and than she went againe. 121

We salued her, as reson woulde it so,
 Ful humble beseeching her gret godenesse
 In our mattires that we had for to do
 That she wolde be gode lady and maiestresse;
 Ye be welcome, (quod she) in sothfastnesse,
 And se, what I can do you for to plesse
 I am redy, that may be to your ese. 128

We folowed her unto the chambir dore; Then
 Sisters, (quod she) comt ye in afir me; You must
 But wete ye wel there was a pavid flore We be now
 The godlyist that any wight might se; To folowe
 And furthir more about than lokid we We have none
 On eche cornir and upon every wal Besching you
 Whiche was ymade of burel and crystal 459

Wherein was graven of stories many one Then
 Firste howe Phyllis, of womanly pite, To be the
 Dyed pitcoulsly for love of Demophone, There for to
 Next afir was the story of Thisbe, The people
 Howe that she slewe herselfe undir a tre; Nowe stand
 Yet sawe I more, howe in ryght pitous caas And for
 For Antony was flaine Cleopatras; 462

Upon that othir side was Hawes the shene, And
 Ful untrewly discevid in her baine; Making a way
 There was also Annelida the Quene, More at our
 Upon Arcite howe fore she did complain; The becke
 Al these stories wete gravid there certaine, So afir
 And many mo than I reherse you here; She brought
 It were to longe to tel you al in fere; 469

And bicause that the wallis shope so bright We
 With fine umple they were al ovir sprad, I ful humble
 To the entent folke shuld not hurte ther sight, In
 And thorough it the stories might be radde; That sh
 Than furthir more I went as I was lad, Ye be welcom
 And there I sawe withoutin any faile And so
 A chaire yset with subriche aparaile; 476

And five stages it was set fro the grounde,
 Of cassidony ful curiously wrought,
 With foure poyntes of golde, and very rounde,
 Set with saphire as gode as coude be thought,
 That wot ye what? if it wer thorough sought
 As I suppose fro this countre to Inde
 Anothir soche it were right harde to finde: 483

For wete ye wel I was right nere to that,
 So as I durst, beholding by and by,
 Above there was a riche clothe of estate
 Ywrought with the needle ful straungely,
 Her worde thereon, and thus it said truly,
En Dieu est, to tel you in wordis fewe,
 With grete lettis, the bettir I'hem knewe: 490

Thus as we stode a dore opened anon,
 A gentilwoman femely of stature,
 Bering a mace, came out her selfe alone,
 Sothely me thought her a godely creature;
 She spake nothings to lowde, I you ensue,
 Nor hastily, but with godely warninge
 Make rome, (quod she) my lady is cominge. 497

With that anon I sawe Perseveraunce
 Howe she helde up the tapet in her hande,
 I sawe also in godely ordinaunce
 This gret lady within the tapet stande,
 Comyng outwarde I wol ye undirstande,
 And aftir her a noble company,
 I coude not tel the nombre sikirly. 504

Of the hand I wolde nothing enquire,
 Furthir than soche as we wolde sewe unto,
 Save a lady which was the chauncellere,
 Attentive; sochely her name was so,
 For us neith with her have moche to do
 In our mattirs, and alway more and more;
 And so forthe to tellin you furthir more.

Of this lady, cherbeaute to discribe
 My conninge is to simple verily,
 For nevir yet the dayis of my live
 So inly faire, I have seene none trewly,
 In her estate assaid uttirly;
 There wantid nought, I dare you wel assure,
 That longid to a most godely creature.

And furthir more, to speke of her aray,
 I shal tel you the manir of her gowne,
 Of clothe of golde ful riche, it is no nay,
 The colour blew, of right godely facyoun,
 In taberde wise, the sleeves hanging addown,
 And what purfil there was, and in what wise,
 So as I can I shal it you devise.

Aftir a sorte the collir and the venter,
 Lyke as armine is made in purfilinge,
 With grete perlis ful fine and orient,
 They were couchid all aftir one worching,
 With diamondes in stede of powdiring,
 The slevis and the purfil of a lise,
 They werin made alike in every wise.

Aboute her hieghes sorte of faire rubyes low
 In white flouris of right fine enamaile;
 Upon her hed set in the fairist wisel
 A circle of grete balais of entaile;
 That in earnest, to speke withoutin faile,
 For yonge and olde and every manir age
 It was a worlde to loken on her visaged

Thus coming forth to sit in her estate,
 In her presence we kneled down every chone;
 Presenting our byllis; and wote ye what?
 Ful humbly she toke hem by one and onen
 When we had done than came they abanone
 And did the same eche aftir her manere;
 Kneling at ones and risinge al in fere.

When this was don, and she set in her place,
 The chambirlaine she did unto her cal;
 And she godely coming to her apace,
 Of her entent knowinge nothing at al;
 Voyde backe the prese (quod she) up to the wall,
 Make large rome, but loken that ye do not tary;
 And take these byllis to the secretary.

The chambirlaine did her commandement,
 And came againe as she was byd to do;
 The secretary there beyng present,
 The byllis were delivered her also,
 Not onely ours but many othir mo;
 Than the lady with gode advise againe
 Anone with al callid her chambirlaine.

We wol (quod she) the first thing that ye do
 The secretary ye make come asone
 With ther billis, and thus we wil also
 In our presence she rede hem every chon.
 That we may takin gode advise theron
 Of the ladies that ber of our counsaile
 Hoke this be done without in any faile

Whan the chambirlaine wiste of her entent
 Anone she did the secretarye call;
 Let your billis (quod she) be here present
 My lady' it wil Madame; (quod she) I shal
 And in presende she wil that ye hem call
 With right gode wil I am redy (quod she)
 At her plesure, whan she comen with me.

And upon that was made an ordinaunce
 They that came first ther byllis shoulde be red,
 Ful gentilly than said Perseverance,
 Reson it wil that they were sonist spedde;
 Anone withal, upon a tapet spredde,
 The secretarye layde hem doun ech one;
 Our byllis first she redde the one by one.

The first lady bering in her deuil
Sans que jamais, thus wrote she on her byl,
 Complaining sore, and in ful pitous wise,
 Of promisse made with faithful hert and wyll,
 And so brokin ayenst al manir skil,
 Without deserte alwaies on her partie,
 In this matir desiring remedye.

Her next following her word was in this wise,
Un sans changer, and thus she did complaine;
 Though she had be guerdoned for her service;
 Yet nothing like as she that toke the paine;
 Wherefore she coude in no wise her restrain;
 But in this case fewe until her presence;
 As reson wolde, to havin recompence.

So furthirmore, to speke of othir twaine,
 One of 'hem wrote after her fantasy
Onques puis lever, and for to tel you plain;
 Her complaint was ful pitous verily,
 For, as she said, there was grete reson why;
 As I can remembre in this matere;
 I shal you tell the processe all in fere.

Her byl was made complaininge in her gyse,
 That of her joye, hat comforte, and gladnesse;
 Was no suretie, for in no manir wise
 She said therein no point of stablenesse;
 Nowe yl, now wele, out of al sikirnesse;
 Ful humbly desiring of her high grace
 Some to shewe her remedy in this case.

Her felawe made her bil, and thus she said;
 In plaining wise, Thise as she lov'd best;
 Whethir that she were wrothe or wele apais'd;
 She might not se when that she wold faunst;
 And fulle wrothe she was in very ernest;
 To tel her worde, as forforth as I wote,
Entierement vostre, right thus she wrote.

And upon that she made a grete request
 With hert and wil, and al that might be done,
 As until her that might redresse it better,
 For in her minde there might she find it sooner,
 The remedy of that which was her done,
 Reherfing that that she had saide before,
 Beseeching her it might be so no more. 623

And in like wise as they had done before,
 The gentyl women of our company,
 Put ther byllis, and for to tell you more,
 One of hem wrote *Clyfane diu* verily,
 And her matere wholly to specyfy,
 Within her byl she put it in writinge,
 And what it said ye shall have knowinge. 630

It said, God wote, and that ful pitously,
 Lyke as she was disposed in her herte,
 No misfortune that she toke greuously,
 Al one to her was the joy and the merrite,
 Sometime no thankis for al her gode deserte,
 Othir comforte she wantid none coming,
 And so usid it grevid her nothing; 637

Desiring her and lowly beseeching,
 That she wolde for her seke a better way,
 As she that had yben her daies lyving,
 Stedfast and trewe, and wil be fals why,
 Of her felawe somewhat I shal you say,
 Whose byl was red the nexte forthe withal,
 And what it ment reherfing you shal. 644

En Dilecti she wrote in her devise, I know not
 And thus she said without in any faile, I know not
 Her trouthe, ne might be takin in no wise, I know not
 Like as she thought, wherfor she had mervaille, I know not
 For trouthe somtyme was wont to take availe, I know not
 In every matter, but al that' is ago, I know not
 The more pyte that it is suffrid for, I know not

Moche more there was, wherof she shoulde complain,
 But she thought it to gret an embraunce
 So moche to write, and therefore in certain
 In God and her she put all her assaunce
 As in her worde is made a remembraunce,
 Beseching her that she wolde in this case
 Shewe unto her the favour of her grace.

The thirde she wrote reherfing her grevaunce,
 Ye, wote ye what a pitous thing to here
 For as me thought she felt gret displeaunce,
 One might ryght wel perceve it by her chere;
 And no wondir, it sate her passyng nere,
 Yet lothe she was to put it in writinge,
 But *Nede wol havin' course in every thinge*.

Soyes assuré, this was her word certain,
 And thus she wrote within a litil space;
 There she lovid her labor was in vaine,
 For he was set al in anothir place;
 Ful humilly desiring in that case
 Some gode conforte her sorowe to appese,
 That she might livin more at hert' is esse.

The fourth surely me thought she likid wel,
 As in her porte and in her behavinge,
 And *Bien m'ungste*, as ferre as I coude fele,
 That was her worde, tyl her wel belonging,
 Wherfore to her she praied above al thing
 Ful hertily, to say you in substaunce,
 That she wold sendin her gode Countinaunce. 679
 Ye have reherfid me these byllis all,
 But nowe let se somewhat of your entent;
 It may so hap paravinture ye shal;
 Nowe I pray you while I am here present
 Ye shal have knowlege parde what I ment,
 But thus I say in trouth, and make no fable,
 The cace it selfe is inly lamentable; 686

And wel I wote that ye wol thynke the same,
 Lyke as I say, whan ye have herde my byl;
 Now gode, tel on; I hate you by Saint Jame;
 Abyde a while, it is not yet my wil,
 Yet must ye wete by reson and by skil,
 Sith ye' have knowlege of that was don before,
 And thus it is said, without wordis more: 693

Nothing so lese as deth to come to me,
 For final ende of my forowes and paine;
 What shuld I more desire as semith ye?
 And ye knewe al aforne it for certaine
 I wote ye wolde, and for to tel you plaine,
 Without her helpe that hath al thinge in cure
 I can nat thinke that it may longe endure. 700

As for my trouble it hath he provid wisely
 To say the sothe, and I can say no more
 Of ful longe tyme, and suffrid every delectation
 In patience, and kepe it all in store
 Of her godenesse beseeching her therefore
 That I might have my thanks in soche a wise
 As my deserte yservith of justise.

When these billis were rad every chon
 The ladie toke a gode advisement,
 And 'hem to answer in by one and one
 She thought it was to moche in her entent;
 Wherefore she yave to 'hem commaundement
 In her presence to come both one and all
 To yeve 'hem her answer in generall.

What dyd she than suppose ye verily
 She spake her selfe, and said in this manere
 We have wel sene your hyllis by and by,
 And some of 'hem be pitous for to here,
 We wol therefore ye knowe al this in sere,
 Within shorte tyme our court of parlyment
 Here shal be holde in our palays presente.

And in al this wherin you find, you greved
 There shall ye finde an opin remedy,
 In soche a wise as ye shal be releved
 Of al that ye relier in here throughly,
 As for the date, ye shal knowe verily
 That ye may have a space in your coming,
 For Diligence shal tel you by writing.

We thankid her in our most humble wise
 Our felawship eche one by one assent,
 Submittinge us lowly til her service,
 For as we thought we had our trauaile spent
 In soche wise as we heldin us content;
 Than eche of us toke othir by the sleve;
 And forth withal as we shulde take our leue 733

Al sodainly the watir sprange anon
 In my visage, and therewithal I woke
 Where am I now? thought I; al this is gone,
 Al masid; and up I began to loke
 With that anon I went and made this Boke,
 Thus simpilly reherfing the substaunce,
 Bicause it shulde not be out of remembraunce 742

Now verily your dreame is passing gode,
 And worthy to be had in remembraunce,
 For though I stand here as longe as I stode
 It shulde not to me be none encombraunce,
 I toke therin so inly grete plessaunce,
 But tel me now what ye the boke do cal,
 For I muste wete wyth right gode wyl ye shal. 749

As for this boke, to say you very right,
 And of the name to tel you in certainte,
L'assemble de Dames, thus it hight,
 How thinkin ye? That name is gode parde,
 Nowe go; farewell; for they cal astir me
 My felawes al, and I must astir sone;
 Rede wel my dreame, for now my tale is done. 756

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